FORUM HISTORIAE

Networking and Trust During the Cold War (An Introduction)

Adam Hudek – Marína Zavacká

Abstract

HUDEK, Adam – ZAVACKÁ, Marína. Networking and Trust During the Cold War (An Introduction).

The article examines different concepts of the term "trust" within the social sciences, summarising the most important attitudes of experts on the importance of trust in modern societies. Trust and distrust have continually influenced the structure of social hierarchies and been decisive factors for acceptance, exclusion, and control. This analysis focuses primarily on the phenomenon of political and interpersonal trust—or the lack thereof—in both democratic and communist regimes. In geographic terms, the text is anchored in Czechoslovakia and neighbouring soviet satellites, with a slight overlap of selected African countries. It deals predominantly with the bilateral relationships between citizens and political institutions, and between institutions and their representatives, especially during transition periods following political crises.

Keywords: Political trust, distrust, networks, Cold war, dictatorship, social history, 20th century history, Communism, democratization

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Trust as a bond within human communities, from families to international organizations, and also in terms of political life has become a significant research topic for social historians. For social scientists, the concept of "trust" is, by far, not a new term and is generally viewed as an essential piece of any study. As Kenneth Newton, Dietlind Stolle and Sonja Zmerli observed in their article *Why Social and Political Trust Are Important*, "the importance of trust in government has been well recognized for some 2,500 years, at least since Confucius observed that the ability to rule rests on the foundations of weapons, food, and trust".[1] In Europe, the modern concept of trust was introduced by John Locke. For him, it is closely connected with the sovereignty of people and no political society or legitimate government can function without the trust of people.[2] For Marxists as well, trust is of prime importance for a functioning society, though according to the Marxist view, the existence of rational trust depends on creating a structurally just social order and eliminating exploitation.[3]

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1 NEWTON, Kenneth – STOLLE, Dietlind – ZMERLI, Sonja. Why Social and Political Trust Are Important. In USLANER, Eric M. (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Social And Political Trust*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2018, p. 37.

2 See: LOCKE, John. *Second Treatise of Government*. Indianapolis : Hackett, 1980.

3 DÜNN, John. Trust and Political Agency. In Diego Gambetta (ed.) *Trust*. Oxford : Oxford University Press 1988, p. 73-93.

The majority of social scientists agree that contemporary liberal democracies cannot function without trust in the form of social capital.[4] According to Václav Havel:

> The state is not something unconnected to society, hovering above or outside it, a necessary and anonymous evil. The state is a product of society, an expression of it, an image of it. It is a structure that a society creates for itself as an instrument of its own self-realization. If we wish to create a good and humane society, capable of making a contribution to humanity's coming to its senses, we must create a good and humane state.[5]

In this process, trust is inevitable. However, even autocracies and dictatorships cannot function on fear alone or the promise of material wellbeing without a modicum of trust between rulers and the ruled, which also aids in securing compliance. Anthony Giddens, one of the most influential scholars on this topic, underlines the importance of trust among the specific condition of modern societies, considering reflexivity, globalization and level of risk.[6] Regarding the research of modern societies, Barbara A. Miszal writes:

> The interest in trust has not been limited to disputes about how to confide in institutions but has related to debates as to how to project qualities of trust and cooperation on to the state and the market. Trust is no longer seen as a regulatory mechanism; but rather as a public good.[7]

As Ute Frevert reminds us, contrary to the concept of legitimacy or loyalty, "trust" is not only an analytical term but is also used in everyday speech. Here, the term becomes blurry and vague in the sense that there is a difference between ordinary and scholarly meanings.[8] In addition, while scholars agree on the essential role trust plays as a concept in social theory, they do not necessarily agree on the meaning of the term. Regarding a specific definition of political trust and mistrust, authors of published studies accept Luhmann's inclusive approach,[9] based on a wide definition of trust as a constituting element of historical action pervasive in all levels of civic life. Political trust is understood in this context as a mutual relationship between the public and political institutions, or as well between different groups and levels of political representatives, from local to international. A certain level of ambiguity thus remains as a unifying feature of the issue.

The concept of trust is traditionally closely connected with that of legitimacy. In such theories, trust in institutions is a prerequisite for their legitimacy and "is associated with political participation and consent".[10] According to Barbara A. Misztal:

> The notion of trust is also being increasingly used by social researchers in an attempt to explain the empirical differences in achieved levels of cooperation in various social and political environments.[11]

4 BEHRENDS, Jan C. Soll und Haben Freundschaftsdiskurs und Vertrauensressourcen in der staatssozialistischen Diktatur. In FREVERT, Ute (ed.) *Vertrauen. Historische Annäherungen*. Göttingen : Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003, p. 338.
5 HAVEL, Václav. A dream for Czechoslovakia. In *The New York Review of Books*, 1992, Vol. 39, No. 12, p. 13.
6 See: GIDDENS, Anthony. *Modernity and Self-Identity*. Cambridge : Polity Press, 1991.
7 MISZTAL, Barbara A. *Trust in Modern Societies. The Search for the Bases of Social Order*. Cambridge : Polity Press, 1996, p. 2.
8 FREVERT, Ute. Vertrauen - eine historische Spurensuche. In FREVERT 2003, Vertrauen, p. 67.
9 LUHMANN, Niklas. *Trust and Power*. Chichester : Wiley, 1979, p. 88.
10 MISZTAL 1996, p. 245.
11 MISZTAL 1996, p. 2.

In modern, multicultural or multinational societies that are experiencing political and economic changes or crises, and are threatened by emigration, immigration, religious or ethnic conflicts, the building of interpersonal, institutional and political trust is considered essential in establishing social cohesion.[12]

This issue of Forum Historiae carries a central theme of Networking and Trust, providing an analysis of a range of "experiences with trust". The topic of political trust and distrust is explored, and trust relationships between citizens and political institutions, and between institutions and their representatives are analysed, especially in the wake of political ruptures. There is a focus on the Cold War era, however, in some cases continuities in developments overlap the given period. In a certain way, it was inspired by the UCL SSEES 2012 Conference on Trust and Distrust in the USSR[13] and its 2013 sequel, which presented a wider research focus including the former Eastern Bloc.

In the research of trust from a historical point of view, it is evident that time plays a crucial role. "It needs no more than a cursory inspection to show that the theme of trust involves a problematic relationship with time," noted German sociologist Niklas Luhmann, author of what is considered the canon on the subject, *Trust*, published in 1968.[14] Trust is a matter of the present moment, and it influences the future. Though he stresses, "it needs history as reliable background. One cannot confer trust without all previous experiences."[15]

Trust in Communist East-Central Europe

It is symptomatic that scholarly interest in the concept of trust relates to the rapid political and social changes after the fall of communist regimes in the former Eastern Bloc. One of the most significant examples is a cultural and economic comparative analysis from Francis Fukuyama entitled *Trust*: *The Social Virtues and The Creation of Prosperity*. The author stresses the significance of social capital and cultural capacity to create large and flexible networks of trust within the growing global economy.[16] Another piece from Polish sociologist Piotr Sztompka, *Trust: A Sociological Theory*, discusses political trust as the constitutive element in society and is based on experiences with the late communist regime and subsequent transformation. Sztompka points out that "the close, solidaristic community of citizens, committed and loyal toward political authority, could not exist without horizontal trust toward each other as well as vertical trust toward public institutions."[17]

According to British expert on Russian history Geoffrey Hosking[18], the collapse of the communist regimes and problematic transition towards the Western market economy clearly showed a need to research the historical context of "trust" as a social phenomenon.

Hosking noted a paradox of the fall of institutions, which were in the long term both outwardly stable and generating stability until they, in the view of many contemporary Sovietologists, "suddenly" collapsed. His interest in an earlier period of Soviet history, appropriate due to the low levels of trust, the Stalinist 1930s, led Hosking to further study

12 NEWTON – STOLLE – ZMERLI 2018, p. 38.
13 Trust and distrust in the USSR. Special issue of *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 2013, Vol, 91, No. 1.
14 LUHMANN, Niklas. *Vertrauen: Ein Mechanismus der Reduktion sozialer Komplexität*. Stuttgart : Enke, 1968.
15 LUHMANN 1979, Trust, p. 20.
16 See: FUKUYAMA, Francis. *Trust: The Social Virtues and The Creation of Prosperity*. New York : The Free Press, 1995.
17 SZTOMPKA, Piotr. *Trust: A Sociological Theory.* Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 15.
18 See: HOSKING, Geoffrey. *Trust: a History*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2014.

mechanisms of building and maintaining public confidence in institutions and the use of national and ethnic symbols. According to his observations, historians pay too much attention to power and tend to neglect trust.[19] Such a shift in focus should enable a better understanding of social processes in the past and present alike. He also reveals an important moment in the weighing of trust, which can be strong or weak regarding the extent of risk and value of committed resources, and also thick or thin in terms of the depth of knowledge and intensity of contact with the person or institution one trusts.[20] Hosking offers a valuable observation on strong, thin trust as gradually prevailing, but it is often erroneously interpreted as absent:

> We misunderstand the nature of trust today because we have not realized that strong thin trust has become the dominant mode. It is more reliable and all-embracing, but less "warm" and personal than thick trust, hence we feel trust has declined.[21]

According to the traditional view, the socialist dictatorships did not need to be concerned with legitimacy, support or the trust of citizens in the system because they had the means to suppress any signs of dissatisfaction or calls for change.[22] As Diego Gambetta observed, societies relying on the use of force and coercion tend to be less efficient, more costly and generally more unpleasant than those with high levels of trust.[23] According to such an argument, the disintegration of the Soviet system proved that the weakness of undemocratic states lies in their lack of social trust. Barbara A. Misztal writes that:

> People in communist societies were supposed to trust the system without questioning it, without having a chance to check it, or without even an opportunity to retreat from it. […] Hence, to trust or not to trust the system was not the individual responsibility as there was no freedom of choice.[24]

It needs to be stressed that political elites during Stalinism also knew the value of trust in society. As William Mishler and Richard Rose demonstrate in their case study *Popular evaluation of Civil and Political institutions in post-Communist societies* (1997), both democratic and dictatorial power needs to maintain and develop a certain level of popular confidence in institutions.[25] While democracies depend on it due to their limited use of repressive apparatus, dictatorships—aside from demanding manifestations of trust or at least compliance through pressure—strive to achieve power stability through various collective guarantees (security, living standards, etc.).

The problem is the gap between what was expected and reality. In fact, in communist societies, institutional and political trust as social capital was always in short supply, especially in comparison with Western democracies.[26] The centralized power of the party-state undermined cooperation, negotiation and respect for anything other than official positions. Pragmatic acceptance and conformism acted as a cover-up for the system. Despite

19 HOSKING 2014, p. 200.
20 HOSKING 2014, p. 47.
21 HOSKING 2014, p. 195.
22 LETKI, Natalia. Trust in Newly Democratic Regimes. In USLANER 2018, p. 338.
23 GAMBETTA, Diego. Can we trust trust? In GAMBETTA, Diego (ed.) *Trust: Making and breaking cooperative relations*. Oxford : Basil Blackwell, 1988, p. 221.
24 MISZTAL 1996, p. 195.
25 MISHLER, Wiliam – ROSE, Richard. Trust, Distrust and Skepticism: Popular Evaluations of Civil and Political Institutions in Post-Communist Societies. In *The Journal of Politics*, 1997, Vol. 59, No. 2, pp. 418-451.
26 BEHRENDS 2003, p. 363.

this, there still was a need for trust, "in response to the unpredictable, hostile institutional environment and severe economic shortages, citizens of communist states formed tight networks of trust and reciprocity they could rely on for everyday provision of goods and for support."[27] The research of James Mark on the Hungarian middle-class indicates how much the level of political and social trust correlated with stability and strength, namely due to its readiness to carry the risk of trusting "anonymous" institutions and persons unrelated through kinship.[28] The self-confidence of this strata, based on professional qualifications linked to literacy and often directly to administration skills, also serves as a reservoir of survival skills such as the ability to outwardly conform, invent suitable "new pasts," and form discreet networks of mutual support. With the vertical trust between citizens and the ruling elites destroyed, strong horizontal networks of interpersonal trust and reciprocity were essential for coping with the problems of everyday life.[29]

In this context, the research results of Alexey Tikhomirov are very interesting, namely his search for an answer to the question of whether the trust among society in Soviet Russia was actually low or if it was simply manifested in other ways, unfitting traditional categories and thus escaping attention. In his study on the regime of forced trust in the environment where the Communist party was its sole, (self)declared distributor he asked:

> Was it really possible to sustain the viability of a political mechanism for such a long time without trust? What kind of a role did trust play in processes of social integration, disciplining and mobilizing the population politically?[30]

Introducing the term "forced trust", he claims:

> Forced trust was based on observation of a ethical-moral codex of honour that joined the state and the population together through bonds of mutual obligations, duty and emotions rather than by the rule of law, civil rights and well-functioning institutions.[31]

Tikhomirov also focused on distrust as a not merely an antonym, signalling the absence of trust, but as an equally constitutive factor in the creation of social hierarchies. He argues that:

> Distrust formed a system of coordinates with its own harsh rules of behaviour and rhetoric, cruel methods of control and oversight and its singular practices of inclusion and exclusion, within which a subject could find protection and defense, could identify dangers and opportunities and find meaning in his/her existence and could collaborate with the regime.

Contrary to common expectations, "societies of distrust" do not sink into disruption, containing "a much greater potential for mobilizing the population negatively—using images of 'enemies'—in the state's interests." Tikhomirov concludes that in the political environment of Soviet Russia, distrust was a "key factor in making and conserving the emotional bonds between people and state."[32]

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27 BEHRENDS 2003, p. 340.
28 MARK, James. Discrimination, Opportunity, and Middle-Class Success in Early Communist Hungary. In *The Historical Journal*, 2005, Vol. 48, No. 2, pp. 499-521.
29 TIKHOMIROV, Alexey (ed.), Trust and Distrust under State Socialism, 1953-1991, A Special Issue in *Journal of Modern European History*, 2017, Vol. 15, No. 3.
30 TIKHOMIROV, Alexey. The Regime of Forced Trust: Making and Breaking Emotional Bonds between People and State in Soviet Russia. In *Slavonic and East European Review*, 2013, Vol. 91, No. 1, p. 80.
31 TIKHOMIROV 2013, p. 80.
32 TIKHOMIROV 2013, p. 83.

Case studies on the situation in Czech universities are extremely relevant, especially in the research of discourse and acts of political distrust. These works analyse the mechanisms and formal rituals of "expulsion from the collective" during the purges at the beginning of the Normalisation era.[33]

Trust and Democratization

Although the central research issues were different initially in the context of post-communist democratisation (performance, economy, robustness of the institutions), the level of political trust very soon became recognised as "something necessary for new democracies to last".[34] Thus, the concept of trust became essential in research of the transition towards democracy. For many scholars, the post-communist democratisation clearly underlined the importance of trust and provided "insight into both the necessity and the difficulty of generating social cooperation based on trust."[35] Ethnologist and historian Michail Guboglo in his analysis of the mutual relationships of trust and justice in the background of the political mechanism of the ethnic minority referendum, states that the trigger for interest in the factor of trust in Russian social sciences was its deficit in the 1990s, when many people lost interpersonal trust and thus effective cooperation in ensuring the best possible living conditions in post-communist Russia.[36] Together with Claus Offe, we can say that the fall of communist regimes also meant a redefinition of social solidarity and the concept of trust. The new democracies faced a lack of "a fixed set of trustworthy, or at least uncontested social facts and binding institutional forces."[37]

Natalia Letki asserts:

> While scholars expected that democracies would not automatically generate social and political trust that authoritarian regimes destroyed, they did not expect that democratization would further undermine trust."[38]

Although the political distrust generated by communist regimes was replaced by a high level of trust generated by the initial hope in democracy and the expectation of Western economic standards, it was only a short-term development. In Central Europe, and even more in Eastern Europe, the decline of trust occurred surprisingly early. Disappointment with the transition results also drove down the average trust in public institutions (including government, parliament, courts, army, and police) across the post-communist region from the 1990s through the 2010s. The majority of countries in the region have never reversed the profound erosion of public trust that began after 1989. The endemic corruption

33 See: PETRÁŇ, Jozef. *Filozofové dělají revoluci. Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy během komunistického experimentu (1948–1968–1989)*. Praha : Karolinum, 2015. KAŠKA, Václav. *Neukáznění a neangažovaní. Disciplinace* členů *Komunistické strany Československa v letech 1948–1952*. Praha, Brno : Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, Conditio humana, 2014. VOLNÁ, Katka – JAREŠ, Jakub – SPURNÝ, Matěj – PINEROVÁ, Klára. *Prověřená fakulta: KSČ na Filozofické fakultě UK v letech 1969-1989*. Praha : Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, 2009. HOLÝ, Jiří – VOLNÁ, Katka. *Tato fakulta bude rudá!: katedra české literatury Filozofické fakulty Karlovy univerzity očima pamětníků a dokumentů*. Praha : Akropolis, 2009. JAREŠ, Jakub – SPURNÝ, Matěj – VOLNÁ, Katka. *Náměstí Krasnoarmějců 2: učitelé a studenti Filozofické fakulty UK v období normalizace*. Praha : Togga, 2012. JAREŠ, Jakub – SPURNÝ, Matěj – VOLNÁ, Katka. *S minulostí zúčtujeme: sebereflexe Filozofické fakulty UK v dokumentech sedmdesátých a devadesátých let 20. století*. Praha : Academia, 2014.

34 LETKI 2018, p. 336.

35 MISZTAL 1996, p. 9.

36 GUBOGLO, Mikhail Nikolaevich. *Antropologia doveria. Etnosociologicheskie* i *etnopoliticheskie ocherki*. Moscow : Yask, 2016, p. 25.

37 OFFE, Claus. Capitalism by democratic design*?* In *Social Research*, 1991, Vol. 58, No. 4, p. 882.

38 LETKI 2018, p. 351.

of many new democracies proved itself especially an enemy of trust. Dissatisfaction with the economy and the belief that politicians do not care about what people think had the same impact.[39]

Trust and Experts

Since the economic crisis of 2008–2010, and more recently during the Covid pandemic, it became apparent that the erosion of public trust in Central and Eastern Europe also includes distrust towards scientific institutions and the experts themselves. The same is true for "mainstream" media and all types of traditional elites. "The rationality of technocrats, scientists and administrators is questioned and their concept of 'public good' is rejected."[40] This is a problem because in a highly complex society, experts need to have basic credibility to be trusted. In modern society, trust in the experts and especially in their expertise, is a *sine qua non* of their proper performance.[41] On the other hand, the growing criticism of science's irrational and destructive practices has led to a disintegration of the consensus on progress and the monopoly of science.[42] The negative consequences of this development are visible not only in the Central Eastern Europe, but also in many Western countries.

Content of the Issue

This issue of *Forum Historiae* aims to explore the relationship of trust between citizens and political institutions, as well as between institutions and their representatives, especially in the wake of political ruptures. Authors sought to analyse the phenomenon of trust and distrust across the East-West borders in the sphere of economic, cultural and scientific relationships and the émigré's circles. Studies deal with the majority of issues mentioned in this introduction, with a primary focus on the following:

- The development and maintenance of networks of trust in typologically differentiated environments.
- Survival strategies, performing loyalty, earning political credibility and trust in socialist dictatorships.
- The roles of symbols, rituals and narratives in building and maintaining trust within and across bodies involved in official and unofficial structures.
- The rhetoric of the mutual non-threat – international and domestic.
- Restoration of relationships in workplaces in times following political purges.
- Trust in the expert milieu – continuity in discontinuity.
- The phenomenon of trust and distrust in the emigré circles – gaining the trust of the "West" and at home after 1989.
- Trust between East and West – traveling, scientific relations, international trade, culture, globalization.

39 van der MEER, Tom – DEKKER, Paul. Trustworthy states, trusting citizens? A multilevel study into objective and subjective determinants of political trust. In ZMERLI, Sonja – HOOGHE, Marc (eds.). *Political Trust: Why Context Matters*. Colchester : ECPR Press, 2011, pp. 95-116.
40 MISZTAL 1996, p. 266.
41 WEISKER, Albrecht. Expertenvertrauen gegen Zukunftsangst Zur Risikowahrnehmung der Kernenergie. In FREVERT 2003, p. 397.
42 MISZTAL 1996, p. 265.

The issue presents eight studies on topics of Czechoslovak and Polish history. Jozef Hyrja provides a case study of individual Holocaust survivors who failed to regain Czechoslovak citizenship after World War II due to a specific ethnic definition of eligibility and found themselves "stateless." He illustrates the complex relationship between an individual and institutions, as well as the question of mutual trust and mistrust through the emigration process. The Schwarz family's attempt to emigrate from Czechoslovakia with the assistance of intermediary organizations provides a wealth of insight into the (dis)function of the state and its administration after the war, during a time of defining the country's approach to specific minority groups. This study details the chain of interlinked events and shifting loyalties that often occurred between individuals, intermediaries, donors or sponsors and the state.

Zuzana Panczová's analysis *Conspiracy Theories and Rumours as Key Elements of Political Propaganda in the 1950s* shows how rumours and gossip are often essential communication devices in civil society. Their influence tends to intensify in times of social crises and long-term conflict. The Cold War took place in an almost apocalyptic atmosphere, where fear of an outbreak of a fatal nuclear conflict permeated society. On both sides, combat occurred on a psychological level as a way to gain the trust and sympathy of citizens. The dividing line between East and West was also a demarcation between two frequently reflected images of the enemy presented by representatives of state power and the state-controlled media. However, there was also a less manageable spontaneous public debate, which reacted to the intervention of state supervision, questioned official interpretations and sought its own answers to important social events.

Jerzy Kochanowski researches relationships between the government and society during the era of so-called real socialism by presenting the example of private initiatives in tourism by highlanders from the Podhale Region. With millions of visitors every year, the city of Zakopane has become the biggest tourist centre in Poland since the 1950s. This was due to the expansion of private enterprise by local highlanders that was independent from the "state" sector, creating a clientelist network involving such actors as party functionaries, policemen, and people employed in the justice system, inland revenue, customs, etc. The result of the author's findings is a fascinating documentation of the spaces for manoeuvre in the era of real socialism involving "private" and "state" actors, thus challenging the totalitarian paradigm.

Vítězslav Sommer examines the role of social scientific expertise in Czechoslovakia during the building and governance of the socialist state. In the 1950s, the new social sciences that helped build the institutions and rules of the new regime were established. The roles of social scientists as experts during the reform era of the 1960s and the so-called consolidation regime of the 1970s are analysed, and the 1980s are characterized as a period when the unequal alliance of the social sciences and the socialist state fell apart. The article demonstrates that studying the relationship of state policies towards social scientific expertise deepens our understanding of state socialist rule. Scrutinizing the responses to demands imposed by the state and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia on academia and expertise provides a fresh perspective on the attitudes of the educated middle class towards socialism as a political project and an everyday reality.

In her article *Building and Testing Trust Within a Socialist Dictatorship: The Case of Czechoslovak Experts in Africa Pre and Post-1968*, Barbora Buzássyová explores the foundations of trust between Czechoslovak state bodies and experts who were selected for foreign service in Africa. The primary focus is on the means through which this faith was challenged during long periods of separation from socialist ways of life, which was reinvented after the systemic political changeover in the Czechoslovak administration after August 1968. Drawing on the concept of "navigation," the experts developed strategies to earn and restore credibility in the eyes of party authorities after the total disintegration of previous networks of trust following the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia. During their tenure abroad, experts established trust networks on various levels; not only with Czechoslovak political representatives but also colleagues in their agencies and even officers of the Czechoslovak Intelligence Service. These personal ties proved to be instrumental for negotiating future career prospects after the stormy years of 1968-1969.

Kristina Andělová's piece, *The Genesis of Political Distrust of the So-Called Sixty-Eighters After 1989*, describes the political trajectories of the Prague Spring communist functionaries. These politicians—the so called socialist opposition—represented an important part of the Czechoslovak democratic opposition in the 1970s and 1980. Even though many reform communists also stood at the inception of Charter 77, non-communist dissent was politically distrustful of the socialist opposition. Unlike the "non-political" Charter 77, Czechoslovak socialist opposition has always advocated a profiled political program of democratic socialism. Even so, distrust towards reform communists persisted after 1989.

Agáta Šústová Drelová investigates the central theme concepts in her article, *Trust in the Church Hierarchy Among the Underground Church Community in Post-1968 Slovakia*. With the church hierarchy under tight state control and effectively existing on two levels—officially and "underground"—the level of trust fluctuated and the character changed. Trust was something constructed, challenged and negotiated. Drawing from an analysis of catholic discourse in the late socialist period, the character and level of trust in the local catholic hierarchy changed dynamically according to the present day power structure's relationship with the communist party-state, its relationship with the Vatican and the level and quality of the hierarchy´s relationship with the underground community itself.

In the article *Understanding Democratic Trust and Legitimacy Through the Eyes of the Public Against Violence After the Fall of the Communist Regime in Czechoslovakia*, Matej Ivančík shows how gaining trust both domestically and internationally became a self-evident feature of the 1989 democratic revolution protagonists' activities. Thus, it was present within their very policies aimed at political and economic transition. Unlike Poland or Hungary, whose transition legitimization was framed by the so-called Round-Table Talks, the revolutionaries in Czechoslovakia had to derive legitimacy directly from the very event of the "Velvet Revolution." This exposed their policies to a participatory scrutiny of sorts in an even more imminent manner. To gain trust, something at best transferable to actual political results, i.e. winning the election, the proponents of the democratic revolution in Czechoslovakia engaged in

both policies and politics which would create an environment most preferable to their goals. The article focuses on the political languages of ethics and politics, totalitarianism and Europeanization, and aims at understanding how the environment of gaining trust worked in the Slovak case.

Conclusion

The main goal of this article is to provide an overview of the most common and popular interpretations of the concepts of trust and mistrust. The quoted works provide useful concepts and elaborated theoretical frameworks which have already been applied in case studies or comparisons involving states, institutions or individuals. A number of these approaches are also employed in this issue of *Forum Historiae*. The ambition of these authors is a shift in research regarding political trust and mistrust towards a socio-historical analyses, including interpretations of sources traditionally exploited by authors of political history and the history of diplomacy.

This issue covers the given phenomena within a variety of environments, from the creation and renewal of basic working relationships in workplaces affected by a wave of political purges, to the reopening of international negotiations after serious diplomatic conflicts.

The published texts focus on political trust and distrust as a pervasive and constitutive element on all levels of civic life, focusing mainly on the bilateral relationships between citizens and political institutions, as well as between institutions and their representatives, especially during periods following significant political crises.

Considering the current state of knowledge regarding the topic of trust and mistrust in East-Central Europe, it is only understandable that these presented studies did not explore all key topics, not by far, which will require many years of focused and systematic research. Despite their heterogeneity, however, the case studies published in this issue offer intriguing insight into the analysis of trust and distrust in the East-Central European region during the second half of the 20th century.

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FORUM HISTORIAE

"As Mr. Schwarz is not Jewish, we are unable to handle this case." Elements of (Un)Success in Overseas Emigration from Post-war Czechoslovakia

Jozef Hyrja

Abstract

HYRJA, Jozef. "As Mr. Schwarz is not Jewish, we are unable to handle this case." Elements of (Un)Success in Overseas Emigration from Post-war Czechoslovakia.

Through the case study of the Schwarz family, this paper illustrates the complex relationship between an individual and institutions as well as the question of mutual trust—and mistrust—in the emigration process. The Schwarz family's attempt to emigrate from Czechoslovakia with the assistance of intermediary organizations provides a wealth of insight into the (dis)function of a state and its administration after the war and during a time of defining the country's approach to specific minority groups. This case provides a description of the chain of interlinked events and shifting loyalties which often occurred between the individual, intermediaries, donors or sponsors and the state. It concerns a group of Holocaust survivors who failed to regain Czechoslovak citizenship after World War II based on a specific ethnic definition of eligibility and found themselves "stateless".

Keywords: emigration, citizenship, JDC, Czechoslovakia, trust/mistrust, Holocaust survivors

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This paper examines the decision-making process, parties involved and the relevant change of circumstances that influenced the decision to allow emigration from Czechoslovakia between 1945–1949. A turbulent period of life for one particular family is the focus, which in certain ways did not fit the common official and social categories, or typical classification of citizens. On one hand, the characteristics of this particular family made it difficult for the members to return to the routine of post-war everyday life, which was therefore a key motivation for them to emigrate. On the other hand, those same qualities complicated their relationship with the institutes whose duty it was to help during emigration—through procedural assistance and placement possibilities abroad. In order to be successful in the emigration process, it was required to create and maintain a level of trust—at every stage of the process—from the institutions and bodies as applicants, and to prove one's loyalty towards the officials involved. The practical goals and ideologies of the concerned institutions and bodies were manifold, and at times, even openly contradictory.

Key Protagonists

The main characters in this case are husband and wife Adolf and Erna Schwarz. Both were residents from territories which were part of Czechoslovakia in the interwar

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period, however, based on the Munich Agreement, were ceded to the Third Reich in the fall of 1938. Adolf Schwarz was born April 17, 1904 in the Silesian village of Malá Morávka, close to the city of Bruntál in the north-east of today's Czech Republic.[1] Erna Schwarz, maiden name Grünhut, was born in 1909 in the city of Tachov in the west of the country. Both families identified as German, which is clear from the Czechoslovak 1930 census. Concerning religion, the couple was mixed; Adolf was Roman-Catholic and Erna was from a Jewish family. Although the couple lived in Prague, where Adolf worked, since their wedding in 1934, the institutionalized anti-Semitism intimately influenced their lives in fall of 1938 when Erna's parents were forced to flee the Nazi occupied border region of Sudety,[2] finding shelter in Adolf and Erna's flat in Prague. Following March 1939, that is after the declaration of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, Nazi race persecution laws started to concern Erna as well. Her Jewish parents were deported to concentration camps in October 1941, where they both perished. Fortunately, Erna survived the Holocaust as the "wife of a Catholic" who refused to divorce her and as such was persecuted himself, even sent to a concentration camp in 1944.

Struggle for Citizenship

After liberation in May 1945, all of the racial discriminatory norms became invalid and the legal system of the state began to return to the constitutional principles of equality for all citizens before the law. What remained problematic was the actual interpretation of citizenship. Based on the *Constitutional Decree of the President concerning modification of Czechoslovak citizenship of persons of German and Hungarian ethnicity (Ústavní dekret prezidenta o úpravě československého státního občanství osob národnosti německé a maďarské*), approved under law 33/1945 Sb.,[3] members of German and Hungarian ethnic minority were stripped of their citizenship en masse. The regulation adopted a range of vaguely defined conditions under which citizenship could be applied for and regained, such as proving one did not breach the duties of a Czechoslovak citizen, did not act against the Czech or Slovak nation, suffered under the Nazi regime or fought against the Nazi regime during the war.[4] The recognition of a national minority was to be determined based on the last democratic census from 1930, when the basis for the ethnical self-identification was determined by one's mother tongue, however, there was an option of "Jewish nationality" that did not require any knowledge of the Hebrew or Yiddish language.[5] Although the majority of Czechoslovak Jewry in the 1930 census declared themselves Jewish, many of them, which later fit the definition of "Jew" under the racial laws, indicated themselves to

1 Archiv bezpečnostních složek (ABS), fond (f.) 425 – Židovské organizace [Jewish Organizations], box (b.) 214, volume (vol.) 06, f. 0009, *CV of Adolf Schwarz*.

2 Ibidem.

3 For the full text of the Decree, see: JECH, Karel (ed.) *Němci a Maďaři v dekretech prezidenta republiky. Die Deutschen und Magyaren in der Dekreten des Präsidenten der Republik. Studie a dokumenty 1940–1945*. Brno : Doplněk, 2003, pp. 314-349. For Edvard Beneš's approach to the afterwar "Jewish question" in Czechoslovakia and the developments that led to adopting of the decree, see: LÁNÍČEK, Jan. *Ve stínu šoa. Československá exilová vláda a Židé během druhé světové války a po ní*. Praha : Academia, 2018, pp. 180-205; LÁNÍČEK, Jan. *Czechs, Slovaks and the Jews, 1938–48: Beyond idealisation and condemnation*. Basingstoke : Palgrave Mmacmillan, 2013.

4 ČAPKOVÁ, Kateřina. Medzi vyhnáním a záchrannou akcí. Transporty německy mluvících Židu z Československa v roce 1946. In ČAPKOVÁ, Kateřina – RICHTER, David (eds.) *Židé nebo Nemci? Německy mluvící Židé v poválečném Československu, Polsku a Německu*. Praha : NLN, s.r.o., 2019, pp. 19-20; ŠUTAJ, Štefan (ed.) *Dekréty Edvarda Beneša v povojnovom období*. Prešov : Universum, 2004.

5 ČAPKOVÁ, Kateřina. *Češi, Němci, Židé? Národní identita Židu v Čechách 1918 až 1938*. Praha : Nakladatelství Paseka, 2013, p. 36. See also: ČAPKOVÁ – RICHTER 2019.

be members of the majority population or part of the German or Hungarian minority.[6] This arbitrary, subjective indication made at the time of the 1930 census became the criterion which defined eligibility for citizenship of the renewed state after the war. Despite explicit language that excluded citizens persecuted by the Nazi regime from withdrawal of citizenship, which was also the case of Adolf Schwarz as the "spouse of a Jew" and a person deported to a concentration camp, many times institutions at lower levels ignored the jurisdiction. Frequently, even Jewish survivors of concentration and extermination camps returning home to Czechoslovakia were refused recovery of Czechoslovak citizenship. The reason was again their declaration of German ethnicity in the 1930 census, and many of these cases were part of the forced deportation to Germany. In September 1946, The Council of the Jewish Communities in Bohemia and Moravia still considered it a victory to have negotiated an exception to the discriminatory law with the Ministry of Interior which exempted Jews from mass deportations, even if they had declared German or Hungarian nationality in 1930.[7] Though, even this did not guarantee an automatic return of their Czechoslovak citizenship without further complications.[8]

In the case of the Schwarz family, there was one aspect which had a negative—and seemingly decisive—influence in the evaluation of their citizenship; the conservative principle of marital law, which was introduced into Czechoslovak legislation from the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy according to which the wife after marriage "was to follow" the citizenship of her husband.[9] So, during the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, Roman-Catholic Adolf Schwarz was, according to racial legislation, in the eyes of the state authority underprivileged as a "husband of a Jew". After the war, his ethnicity in the eyes of the public administration was the key factor in defining citizenship for both him and his wife Erna. Even though she was Jewish and Holocaust survivor, the key element was her husband's ethnic background.

While administration delays in the first months after the war could be blamed on general chaos, later the Schwarzes, once loyal to their home country, lost faith that the situation at home could be resolved. Without indubitable documents, as citizenship papers were, it became more and more difficult to sustain elementary daily needs such as housing, employment, etc. On top of it all, there was a growing tendency in domestic politics in which

6 According to data from the census in 1930, of all the Czechoslovak Jewry, 24.52 % declared Czechoslovak nationality, 4.71 % Hungarian, 12.82 % German and 57.2 % Jewish. See: LÁNÍČEK, Ján. What did it mean to be Loyal? Jewish Survivors in Post-War Czechoslovakia in a Comparative Perspective. In *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 2014, Vol. 60, No. 3, p. 388.

7 In BULÍNOVÁ, Marie (ed.) *Československo a Izrael v letech 1945–1956. Dokumenty*. Praha : ÚSD AV ČR, HÚ AČR, SÚA, 1993, *Instructions from the interior ministry for decision-taking by the appropriate organs, 1946, 13 September, Prague*, pp. 55-59.

8 It is hard to determine how many of the approximately 15 % of the Jewish survivors (approx. 23 thousand in Bohemia and Moravia and up to 32 thousand in Slovakia, including 8 thousand resettled Jews from Carpathian Ruthenia) from the Jewish pre-war population in Czechoslovakia originated from which nationality group. Generally, the sources speak of "thousands of people" affected by the restrictions. See: ČAPKOVÁ 2019, p. 12, 15. For different estimates see: VOBECKÁ, Jana. *Demographic Avant Garde. Jews in Bohemia between the Enlightenment and the Shoah*. Budapest; New York : CEU Press, 2013, p. 31; YEGAR, Moshe. *Československo, sionismus, Izrael. Historie vzájemných vztahů*. Praha : Victoria Publishing, 1997, pp. 61-62; NEPALOVÁ, Šárka. Židovská menšina v Čechách a na Moravě v letech 1945–1948. In *Terezínské studie a dokumenty*. Praha : Academia, 1999, pp. 314-337; BÜCHLER, Yehoshua. Reconstruction Efforts in Hostile Surroundings: Slovaks and the Jews after World War II. In BUNKIER, David (ed.) *The Jews Are Coming Back. The Return of the Jews to their Countries of Origin after WWII*. Jerusalem : Yad Vashem, 2005, p. 257; SALNER, Peter. *Židia na Slovensku po roku 1945 (Komunita medzi vierou a realitou)*. Bratislava : VEGA, 2016, pp. 40-43.

9 Constitutional Law n. 236/1920 Sb., § 16. For more details see entry: „Občanství státní". In *Slovník veřejného práva československého*, Vol. 2. Brno: Polygrafia; Rudolf M. Rohrer, 1932, p. 979.

the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was gaining more power and influence. Continuous pressure was put on nationalizing the industry and attacking the "bourgeois elements". Adolf and Erna Schwarz were also marginalized from a "class" point of view. Erna worked as a business correspondent at various firms before marriage and after the wedding, she became a housewife. Adolf worked in a managerial position at the headquarters of a large private enterprise. After repeated, unsuccessful attempts to stabilize their status in Czechoslovakia—likely under the strain of the worsening international situation at the beginning of the Cold War—they decided on emigration.

The Role of Intermediary Organisations

According to available documents, the first intermediary institution the Schwarzes turned to was the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC).[10] A branch of this organisation active in post-war Czechoslovakia handled issues from paperwork and financial aid to legal advice, managing entry permits in destination countries and securing the boat tickets.[11] They even helped with overall time management and assistance with navigation through the complicated process. The relationship between the intermediary official body, in this case the JDC, and the individual applicant was defined by the fact that even though the person was at the time stateless, he/she still had to be considered as "belonging" to Czechoslovakia. The intermediary institutions took up correspondence themselves between individual applicants and destination countries, as well as providing assistance and communication with the local Czechoslovak authorities and non-governmental organisations in the name of candidates. This brought into scope a parallel set of loyalties; the applicants sought to emigrate, to leave the country of their origin yet still needed to certify their past allegiances—activities before and during the war and other demands which could truly demonstrate their loyalty as citizens.

Concerning the choice of potential destinations, the Schwarzes opted for either the USA or Australia. There is no mention of them even considering emigration to Israel, perhaps because of the very fact that they were a mixed couple. While immigration of mixed couples to Israel was not unknown in those times, it remained a matter of special decision of Israeli authorities. There was also the possibility for the non-Jew to convert to Judaism, in practice however, Israel granted permits and welcomed mixed marriages only where the husband was Jewish. The opposite scenario was much more complicated. Historian Ivica Bumová explains the paradoxical outcome of tracing Jewish descent through the maternal line: as the war gained momentum and the state required men to enter the military forces,

10 The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, JDC or Joint, was founded in 1914 initially to provide assistance to Jews living in Palestine under Ottoman rule. The JDC's relief activities, emigration aid and rescue operations were critical before, during and after World War II. The organisation started to operate in Czechoslovakia in 1919–1920 and played a crucial role in mobilizing support and creating a network of social welfare services aimed at resettling Jewish survivors. For more details, see: PATT, Avinoam – GROSSMANN, Anita – LEVI, Linda G. – MANDEL, Maud S. (eds.) *The JDC at 100: A Century of Humanitarianism*. Detroit : Wayne State University Press, 2019.

11 The United Services for New Americans (USNA) guidelines first recommended to travel by boat, as flights were usually one and a half to two times more expensive. A ship from Belgium to the United States could cost $200 per person, the flight from Czechoslovakia was approx. $397 per person. However, as the political situation worsened in Czechoslovakia, the JDC office used any means of transport to move refugees out of the country. Source: JDC Archives, 1945–1954 Geneva Collection, folder ORG.285, *USNA Special Information Bulletin*, Series II, No. 10, 30 March 1947, http://search.archives.jdc.org/multimedia/Documents/Geneva45-54/G45-54_ORG/G45-54_ORG_033/G45-54_ORG_033_0064.pdf#search [last viewed 1 November 2021].

it was considered less likely that a non-Jewish person would be reliable to risk his life for the Jewish state.[12]

The JDC in Prague opened the case of the Schwarz family on September 7, 1948[13] and processed their request for emigration to Australia.[14] The family had also requested emigration to the United States under an official annual quota defined by the US government for Czechoslovakia. They also filed an application for emigration with another international institution active in the country—the International Refugee Organization (IRO).[15] Coordination of emigration to the United States could also be handled via the JDC, but it seems the Schwarzes approached another institution to consider the possibility. It is unknown whether they acted on the JDC recommendation or applied on their own, simply searching for more ways of getting overseas.[16]

Stages of the Administrative Process

The JDC application file of Adolf and Erna Schwarz provides us with more detailed information about their private lives, qualifications and strategies of presenting themselves to particular decision-making bodies. In a document dated September 1, 1948, citizenship of the couple is still classified as "undecided".[17]

Assuming it was Adolf's German ethnic background, which could have been an obstacle for regaining Czechoslovak citizenship for both of them, and of course a richer career life, his file is more detailed and more defensive in wording. In 1948, he was 44 years old and as mentioned, his religion was Roman-Catholic. Living in an ethnically mixed environment, he was fluent in Czech, German and French, and had also acquired a basic knowledge of English. From July 1921 until January 1927, he worked at the Mining and Iron Company Ltd. in the city of Sobotín, 30 km from his birthplace and from 1927 until August 1944 in the Central Bureau of Czechoslovak Factories for Wire and Wiregoods Manufacturers Ltd. in Prague. Documents proving their employment qualifications, professional skills and experience were a mandatory part of the application for emigration and had to be verified by previous employers. Adolf Schwarz attached a letter from the Head Office of his former employer to his application[18] stating that he had 23 years of experience and a very good knowledge of the production, having worked in both the workshops and the sales

12 BUMOVÁ, Ivica. Povojnové pomery židovskej komunity na Slovensku a emigrácia Židov do Palestíny/Izraela v rokoch 1945–1953. In VRZGULOVÁ, Monika – SALNER, Peter (eds.) *Reflexie holokaustu*. Batislava : Dokumentačné stredisko holokaustu, Ústav etnológie SAV, 2010, pp. 30-31.

13 ABS, f. 425 – Židovské organizace, b. 214, vol. 06, f. 0010, reference number 5356, *Application for LP to Australia.*

14 ABS, f. 425 – Židovské organizace, b. 214, vol. 06, f. 0005, *JDC registration form.*

15 *Adolf and Erna Schwarz IRO Application for Assistance*. CM/1 Forms and accompanying documents from DPs in Switzerland as well as correspondence from the International Refugee Organization (IRO) offices in Germany, Austria and the Near East with the IRO headquarters in Geneva. Doc. No. 8117292, https://collections.arolsen-archives.org/, Arolsen Archives.

16 In a letter sent from the JDC in Prague to the USNA office in New York in the same month as the Schwarzes applied for emigration, Helen Kohn explains that in August 1948, from the overall number of 120 visas allowing entry to USA issued by Czechoslovakia, only 44 were given to Czechoslovakians. The rest were issued under a quota for Jews using Czechoslovakia as a transit country by Germans, Poles and Hungarians. These figures pertained only to Jews who came to the JDC for assistance with their emigration, so the quota limit would be reached sooner including direct applicants. Source: JDC Archives, 1945–1954 New York Collection, folder AR194554, *Letter from Helen Kohn to Miss Ann S. Petluck, September 06 1948*, http://search.archives.jdc.org/multimedia/Documents/NY_AR_45-54/NY_AR45-54_Count/NY_AR45-54_00019/NY_AR45-54_00019_00384.pdf#search= [last viewed 1 November 2021].

17 ABS, f. 425 – Židovské organizace, b. 214, vol. 06, f. 0010, *CV of Adolf Schwarz.*

18 ABS, f. 425 – Židovské organizace, b. 214, vol. 06, f. 0049, *Confirmation Letter from Head Office of Wire and Wiregoods manufacturers Ltd. Prague.*

department. His segment of the industry included the production of nails, screws, wires, and cables—an assortment of goods sought after in the era of post-war reconstruction.

In October 1934, Adolf married Erna Grünhut, who was Jewish and therefore from 1939, when the Nazi-controlled Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was proclaimed, he was subjected to "all regulations limiting the freedom of Jews". Since he repeatedly refused to divorce his wife in the face of direct pressure, he was "sent to a concentration camp in Bystřice in Bohemia on August 31, 1944", where he remained until the end of the war.[19] Sonderlager Bystřice u Benešova was one of the smaller camps in the territory of Bohemia, originally meant for "jüdische Mischlinge" but later used as a detention camp for "Aryan" husbands of Jewish wives.[20]

The Schwarz family faced an additional burden when Adolf's parents-in-law fled the occupied Sudetenland in 1938. They lived with the Schwarzes until October 1941, when they were deported to the territory of occupied Poland where they both perished. Before Adolf's own deportation, he also engaged in regular support of prosecuted Jewish families outside his family circle. He sent food packages to various Prague based families in need and those being deported. In case the authorities doubted his efforts, he included seven names and addresses of people who could verify his claims.[21] At the end of his CV, Adolf expressed a list of reasons for his decision to emigrate from Czechoslovakia in a rather "neutral" way, attempting to satisfy representatives of a prospective host country while not damaging relations with the administrative bodies of the country of his origin. He reasoned that since their "application for Czechoslovak citizenship had been refused", they were still "without citizenship at the present", he had "no other option" than to turn to an international institution for help and to emigrate to a place where he would be able to gain full citizen rights.[22]

Erna Schwarz, maiden name Grünhut, was born in 1909 and according to her CV, as a qualified business correspondent she was able to communicate in several languages, namely Czech, German and partially English. Prior to her marriage, she worked for various firms but after marrying Adolf Schwarz in 1934, became a housewife. For skills she mentions "fancycraft work" and taking care of children as a nurse. Despite the marriage to an "Aryan"—and even "German"—husband in February 1945, she was deported to the Terezín concentration camp where she survived until the liberation in May 1945. It is interesting to mention that her deportation came almost a half year after her husband's. Erna was sure that if she "had not been married to a non-Jewish man", she would have been "sent away earlier and would have most probably perished."[23] Further hardships after the end of the war were described in her CV using the same words as her husband.

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19 ABS, f. 425 – Židovské organizace, b. 214, vol. 06, f. 0009, *CV of Adolf Schwarz*.

20 See: ZEMANOVÁ, Věra – PLACHÁ, Pavla. Tábory pro tzv. židovské míšence a nežidovské partnery ze smíšených manželství na českém území v době 2. světové války. In PLACHÁ, Pavla. *„Nepřichází-li práce k Tobě" – různé podoby nucené práce ve studiích a dokumentech. „Kommt die Arbeit nicht zu Dir" – verschiedene Formen der Zwangsarbeit in Studien und Dokumenten*. Praha : Kancelář pro oběti nacismu, 2003, pp. 104-111; KAVENA, Jiří. Sonderlager pro židovské míšence v Bystřici u Benešova. In *Terezínské listy: sborník Památníku Terezín 28*. Praha : Oswald, 2000, pp. 51-60.

21 They were the following: Pavel Thieben, Gréta Schmiedtová, Gréta Worschechová, Milly Windholzová, O. Slapalová, Oskar Beck and E. Steinberger. See: ABS, f. 425 – Židovské organizace, b. 214, vol. 06, f. 0009, *CV of Adolf Schwarz*.

22 ABS, f. 425 – Židovské organizace, b. 214, vol. 06, f. 0009, *CV of Adolf Schwarz*.

23 ABS, f. 425 – Židovské organizace, b. 214, vol. 06, f. 0007, *CV of Erna Schwarz*.

Since the couple was applying for emigration with the help of a Jewish sponsored organisation, Erna Schwarz had to prove that she was a member of the Jewish community. She enclosed a letter of confirmation from the Council of Jewish Communities in Bohemia and Moravia stating that she was of "mosaic faith".[24] Both references from the employer and the religious affiliation had to be confirmed by a notary,[25] which was yet another bureaucratic step and a financial expense for the family. Moreover, the demands of the JDC drove the applicants to a certain level of dependence on their former employers or religious communities and other bodies, for which they had to position themselves as individuals worth the extra efforts.

An important piece of the application was to provide a sponsor who would cover the future emigrants' expenses for transport, or at least part of it, and help them financially or with accommodation upon arrival. The JDC had funds ready at their disposal, however, the demand was much larger than the available resources. The organization did not only finance travel costs for emigration from Czechoslovakia, but also paid for housing, food supplies, medical treatment and many other necessities of Jewish survivors living in Czechoslovakia at the time. Therefore, it was very welcome if the émigrés had their own financial cover, or had relatives or acquaintances to sponsor their trip and initial living expenses. In the application, the Schwarzes stated that they have no financial means to pay for the transportation costs on their own in Czechoslovak crowns. Two relatives were named as potential sponsors, "cousin and sponsor" J. E. Gurry (5 Fairbairn rd., Toorak, S.E.2, Melbourne) in Australia and "cousin" Richard Neubauer (Transcrit Corporation, New York, N.Y.) in the United States. They expected these two would be willing and able to fund their trip to Australia. The relatives abroad could also have been seen as a form of success story, which could have triggered the decision to emigrate and where to emigrate to. According to research done in 1965, 68 % of Czechoslovak Jewish families claimed to have close relatives in foreign countries. Because of the holocaust, they considered whomever from the family—even the most distant relatives—close connections.[26] Viewing emigration as the breaking moment for their future life and counting on the opportunity to repay everything once their goal was reached, they turned to those relatives for everything the institutions required—finances, future accommodation and possible positive references. Presenting an existing anchor in the form of a relative willing to guarantee support was an important asset in the eyes of the receiving country's administration.

The "Head of the Family is a Roman Catholic…" Issue

Meanwhile, due to further developments in the Cold War, the numbers of immigration candidates multiplied[27] and the composition of the applicant group changed

24 ABS, f. 425 – Židovské organizace, b. 214, vol. 06, f. 0011, *The confirmation from Council of the Jewish Communities in Bohemia and Moravia.* See also: ABS, f. 425 – Židovské organizace, b. 214, vol. 06, f. 0012, *Questionnaire for persons of Mosaic confession*.

25 ABS, f. 425 – Židovské organizace, b. 214, vol. 06, f. 0050, *Notary confirmation*.

26 SALNER, Peter. Zmeny hodnotových orientácií Židov na Slovensku po roku 1945 (na príklade emigrácie do Izraela v štyridsiatych, resp. šesťdesiatych rokoch). In SALNER, Peter (ed.) *Židovská komunita po roku 1945*. Bratislava : Ústav etnológie SAV, 2006, p. 103.

27 Democratic Senator Alexander Wiley of Wisconsin on June 2, 1948, expressed during a debate in the US Senate, "This is America, our home. We want good blood to come to this country but we do not want any 'rats'—we have enough of them." His Republican counterpart, Senator Robert F. Rich of Pennsylvania, continued on June 10, 1948, "I am unalterably opposed to the opening of the doors of this country to everyone who wants

dramatically.[28] While shortly after the war, potential émigrés with Jewish backgrounds were seen as escaping Nazi terror, later on, camps in Allied zones in Europe were filled with refugees escaping the rising communist threat. The first law admitting refugees into United States[29] was commonly known as the *DP Act of 1948*. It granted Czechoslovakia a different condition. The country is mentioned specifically, and an "eligible displaced person" is defined as "a native of Czechoslovakia who has fled as a direct result of persecution or fear of persecution from that country since January 1, 1948…"[30] The law was tailor-made to respond to changes that took place in Czechoslovakia after February 1948 with the communists taking over and addressed its natives who have "fled as a direct result of persecution or fear of persecution from that country since January 1, 1948".[31] Still in Czechoslovakia in September 1948 and waiting for finalization of their paperwork, the Schwarzes were becoming latecomers. Fortunately, for people like them, the deadlines for eligibility were not observed rigidly and therefore the process of emigration from Czechoslovakia to the USA could continue, at least in a limited manner.

After verification of their documents, the JDC began the process of possible emigration within their network, notifying partner institutions in the countries which the Schwarzes listed as possible future destinations. The local organisation was to contact the potential sponsors, who would then vouch for the family and cover the costs of their transport. Head of the Emigration Department of JDC Czechoslovakia Helen Kohn (also Ellen Cohen), notified the Jewish Welfare and Relief Society (JWRS) in Australia in a letter dated September 22, 1948, about the Schwarzes' case. A letter from the JDC in Prague contains a request for the partner institution to contact a person by the name of J. E. Gurry, who by this time was already in personal contact with the Schwarzes. Gurry was to arrange an "LP" (Landing Permit) to Australia. Additionally, the JDC in Prague asked the Jewish Welfare and Relief Society to help Mr. Gurry to process and speed-up the arrangement. Lastly, Helen Kohn requested that Mr. Gurry make a deposit towards the transportation costs from Czechoslovakia to Australia amounting to approximately 1500 dollars.[32]

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to come to America from some foreign country [...] I am not going to throw the doors wide open and permit America to be the dumping place for all humanity." Quoted from: NASAW, David. *The Last Million. Europe's Displaced Persons from World War to Cold War.* New York : Penguin Press, 2020, pp. 412, 415-416.

28 For the impact of the DPs and other immigrants on American policy making, see: KOCHAVI, J. Arieh. *Post-Holocaust Politics. Britain, the United States and the Jewish Refugees, 1945–1948*. Chape Hill, London : The University of North Carolina Press, 2001, pp. 89-130. See also: GENIZI, Haim. *America's Fair Share: The Admission and Resettlement of Displaced Persons, 1945–1952.* Detroit : Wayne State University Press, 1993.

29 Signed by President Harry S. Truman on June 25, 1948, officially Public Law 80-774.

30 The formulation stated that anybody, who at the beginning of 1948, was a native of Czechoslovakia and entered any of the Allied dedicated sectors in Germany or Austria by June 1948 was eligible for admittance to the United States. In practice, the deadline for eligibility was in most cases not observed. The process of emigration from Czechoslovakia to the USA could therefore continue and the DP act of 1948 was applied to migrants as well as for DPs already in dedicated camps. For the Soviet zones and the migration policies of USSR, see: POLIAN, Pavel. *Against Their Will: The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR*. Budapest; New York : CEU Press, 2003, pp. 115-164.

31 The limitation of the Act was that "upon the grant of status of permanent residence to such alien as provided for in this section, the Secretary of State shall, if the alien was a quota immigrant at the time of entry, reduce by one the immigration quota of the country of the alien's nationality as defined in Section 12 of the Immigration Act of May 26, 1924." It discriminated against people on the immigration quota waiting lists set by previous regulations for every individual country to be potential new immigrants by transferring their places under this DP Act, limited to 200 thousand people overall, regardless of native state. Source: Pub. L. 80-774, https://uslaw.link/citation/us-law/public/80/774 [last viewed 1 November 2021].

32 ABS, f. 425 – Židovské organizace, b. 214, vol. 06, f. 0047, *Letter from Helen Kohn to Jewish Welfare and Relief Society in Melbourne*.

A similar letter was sent to another partner institution in United States, the United Services for New Americans (USNA).[33] Again, Kohn introduced the case and requested Richard Neubauer to be contacted, and also asked to determine if he is willing and able to contribute towards the transportation costs of their planned immigration to Australia, in the same amount of 1500 dollars. The only difference between the two letters is that the one to the United States mentioned the religious affiliation of the spouses i.e., Mr. Schwarz being Roman-Catholic and Mrs. Schwarz as Jewish.[34]

On October 18, 1948, the JDC office in Prague received a response signed by Ann S. Petluck,[35] the Head of Migration Services at USNA, which almost brought the Schwarzes application process to an end. Before approaching "the local cooperating committee with the request that they contact the interested relative," Petluck asked for clarification of a "serious question, as to whether this case should be handled by our agency".[36] In the understanding of the USNA, this case did not belong to their portfolio since "the head of the family is a Roman Catholic" and demanded an explanation why it was not referred to a relevant Christian agency. This approach was by no means exceptional.

The Secret Service Archive in Prague contains another letter, primarily dealing with the case of the Janovic family,[37] though also related to the Schwarzes. In this case, it was the "Australian Committee" which objected to the husband in the family not being Jewish. In defence of the people the JDC in Prague represented, Helen Kohn described the situation on the ground in a series of letters addressed to the Headquarters of the JDC in Paris, the USNA in New York, the United Jewish Overseas Relief Fund in Australia and to the headquarters of the JDC in New York. Kohn noted that in the local communities, there were "many persons living in mixed marriages where one member of the family is non-Jewish, the other Jewish and a member of the Jewish Community. We do not make any general decisions but consider each case individually." She tried to further strengthen her arguments by listing the deeds of the non-Jewish head of family helping Jews during the war in Prague. She explained that there was a rule to be taken into consideration, "not only to question the local applicants Jewishness, but also the religion of the sponsor abroad and his position in the community, as we feel" she stated, "it often involves a very serious matter in public relations […] The sponsors abroad likewise are Jewish." She stated that the applicants must be evaluated case by case as they in Prague do not make "any general decisions but consider each case individually."

The letter continues with an attempt to secure financial aid for the Schwarz case and their journey. Kohn stressed that both Mrs. Schwarz and the potential sponsor, Mr. Neubauer in New York, were Jewish, considering it a legitimate reason for turning to the USNA for assistance. "We understand, of course, that in the United States the religion of the husband is considered the family religion, this is not generally true here.

33 In the letter to Australia, Helen Kohn referred to the organization as UNISERNA.
34 ABS, f. 425 – Židovské organizace, b. 214, vol. 06, f. 0048, *Letter of Helen Kohn to USNA in New York*.
35 Ann S. Petluck was a lawyer specializing in emigration and a "refugee expert". From 1951 to 1954, she was director of the USNA and from 1954 to 1964, she directed the United States operations for the United HIAS Service (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society). Between 1964 and 1968, she served as deputy regional representative at the United Nations for the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).
36 ABS, f. 425 – Židovské organizace, b. 214, vol. 06, f. 0044 and f. 0043, *Letter from Ann S. Petluck from USNA to JDC Prague*.
37 ABS, f. 425 – Židovské organizace, b. 214, vol. 06, f. 0039 and f. 0040, *Letter from Helen Kohn to JDC Paris – EEH*.

There also is no Catholic agency here that deals in matters of emigration."[38] Interestingly, Helen Kohn did not mention—and nobody seemed to take into consideration—the fact that both Mr. Schwarz and Mr. Janovic are, although non-Jews, survivors of concentration camps. They have both been deported as "Aryans" who refused to divorce their Jewish wives.

In the meantime, the pressure of the Czechoslovak government toward the JDC grew. Authorities requested ever increasing payments in dollars for regular administrative work, complicated paperwork requests and created new fees and tolls to extort money from the JDC budget. Prospective emigrants were almost openly targeted as hostages. In this way, the government deepened the mistrust between them and the state and showed that it had no longer any interest in them as citizens. The bullying went so far that in 1948 and 1949, some important, high-ranking individuals were arrested and the Czechoslovak authorities requested immense sums of money for their release.[39]

The never-ending emigration process, the endless number of documents and uncertain outcome resulted in the Schwarz family doubting their decision to leave for Australia with the help of the JDC. While the agency never gave the Schwarzes reason to doubt that it acted in their best interest, in light of the complicated and seemingly desperate situation involving both the Czechoslovak state and the international institution handling the case, they suspended relations with the JDC as an intermediary but continued to communicate with the sponsor in the USA on their own.

Then, almost four months after the last communication in the Schwarzes case, on March 4, 1949, a letter arrived from the United States in which the USNA informed the JDC office in Prague that agents of the organisation were in touch with Mr. Neubauer who would be ready to pay transportation and he himself is in correspondence with the "overseas clients". Mr. Neubauer indicated that he had the impression from recent correspondence the Schwarzes no longer wished to continue with the Australia plan. "He [Richard Neubauer] understands that they now plan to wait for their regular Czech[oslovak] quota number for United States immigration."[40] The JDS's Prague office should either reject or verify these claims. Finally, in June 1949, the long-awaited LPs to Australia for the Schwarzes arrived,[41] which was yet again arranged by a private person—Mr. Gurry.

The following months became enormously stressful for the Schwarzes. There was immense pressure to speed up the process for two reasons: one being legal and the other political. With a growing number of refugees from Europe and a limited number of spots available on boats, there were numerous instances when the issued LP expired before the refugees reached their destination. This was an issue between the organisations involved and was dealt with in internal communication as well as with the respective ministries in the concerned countries.[42]

38 Ibidem.

39 Among the arrested was the director of the JDC office in Bratislava, Juraj Revesz. They were released a few months later after the intervention of Joseph J. Schwartz, who flew in from Paris. According to Martin Šmok, Schwartz most likely paid up to 5 million Czechoslovak crowns for their release. See: ŠMOK, Martin. *Tajemná smrt v Praze, případ Charlese Jordana.* (manuscript).

40 ABS, f. 425 – Židovské organizace, b. 214, vol. 06, f. 0034 and f. 0038, *Letter from USNA to JDC Prague*.

41 ABS, f. 425 – Židovské organizace, b. 214, vol. 06, f. 0025, *LP information*.

42 In Australia, according to information from the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, who took credit

The political situation in Czechoslovakia changed dramatically with every passing week and the authorities made it harder to even secure a boat ticket. A report from JDC Prague to Paris headquarters stated that Czechoslovak citizens could only book a boat ticket if the given boat is registered with the local Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and if it fulfils criteria defined by Czechoslovak law.[43] Reports from Prague stated that "usual purges in the army, justice, schools, church administrative bodies […] and public administration took place. Entry and exit permits, passports and visas are more difficult to obtain." Furthermore, the executive committee of the Council of Jewish Communities in Bohemia and Moravia was overtaken by communist appointees and the Council "refused to provide food supplies and accommodation paid by us to persons who entered Czechoslovakia illegally […] which puts them at risk of persecution of the police."[44] The JDC in Czechoslovakia operated under very restricted conditions with ever diminishing resources.

On July 11, 1949, the Australian offices made an announcement to the JDC office in Prague concerning the case of the Schwarz family that their "Migration Committee considered this case. However, as Mr. Schwarz is not Jewish, we are unable to handle this case."[45] The decision again failed to recognize Mr. Schwarz eligible because of his confession. The relief institution in Australia closed their case definitely. The Schwarzes were invited to a meeting at the JDC offices, which marked a full year since they first applied for emigration. Based on the August 12, 1949, report, we know that in the meantime, Mr. Schwarz was employed as a clerk in the state company Centrotex, dealing in the export and import of textiles,[46] earning a monthly salary of 4500 Kčs. He was unemployed in 1948. The couple lived in modest surroundings and reconfirmed that they did not own any particular means. Especially mentioned are "furs, jewellery and Persian carpets", which they did not own.[47] They lived in a one room apartment which they rented for 4800 Kčs per year. Whether the couple would be able to cover the necessary financial difference for transportation depended on whether they would be able to sell the furniture and equipment from their apartment.[48] The Schwarzes intention of selling the property might also have been a difficult task. In one of Helen Kohn's reports, she addresses this issue:

In the course of emigration, the Jews are systematically being robbed: the state regulation allows them to only keep basic necessities and clothing, from both they are only allowed to take on the journey up to 100 kg. Apartments, furniture, valuables, all mate-

for the negotiations, the Australian Immigration Minister has promised to issue instructions to the various legations that the expired visas should be renewed. Source: Center for Jewish History, United Service for New Americans Records, b. 23, folder 17 (I-93), *Special Information Bulletin, 1946–1954*, https://digipres.cjh.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE1135872 [last viewed 2 November 2021].

43 See: ŠMOK, Tajemná smrt v Praze (manuscript).

44 All quoted from: ŠMOK, Tajemná smrt v Praze (manuscript).

45 ABS, f. 425 – Židovské organizace, b. 214, vol. 06, f. 0026, *Letter from JWRS in Australia to JDC in Prague*.

46 ABS, f. 425 – Židovské organizace, b. 214, vol. 06, f. 0017, *Report from the meeting, August 12, 1949* (English translation f. 0018).

47 Helen Kohn mentioned the restriction in summer 1948, "it is still prohibited to export carpets, silver, gold or gems, it is also prohibited to export expensive clothing and fur coats." Quoted from: ŠMOK, Tajemná smrt v Praze (manuscript).

48 ABS, f. 425 – Židovské organizace, b. 214, vol. 06, f. 0017, *Report from the meeting, August 12, 1949* (English translation f. 0018).

rial possessions acquired since the return from the concentration camps must remain here and cannot be sold.[49]

This must have resulted in the Schwarzes selling their belonging on the black market, which added more danger to the already difficult situation, were they to be caught by police.

On a JDC copy of an invitation for the Schwarzes to report to the organisation's office in Prague, there is a hand-written note on the reverse side mixing English and Czech. It states that the Schwarzes "are willing to pay the outstanding sum of transportation costs in Czechoslovak crowns by own funds. They have not made the final decision about emigrating. She will come in four weeks to announce her final decision. Date: 15/VII.49. [illegible signature]"[50] It is not clear if these were two different encounters or added information from the meeting on August 12, 1949, though, this document is the last concerning the Schwarz family. Currently, there is no evidence in the Schwarzes file whether they finally emigrated to either Australia or the United States, or remained in Czechoslovakia.

Conclusion

The case of the Schwarz family illustrates the complex relationship and mutual trust/mistrust of all actors involved in the process of emigration. The couple's attempt to leave Czechoslovakia with the assistance of the JDC provides a variety of insights into the functioning of current social networks.

For the purpose of this research, it is secondary whether the family succeeded or failed in their attempt to leave the country. Rather, the chain of interlinked events and shifting loyalties is detailed, occurring between the individuals, intermediaries, donors and the state.

For people like the Schwarzes, the end of the war did not end the hardship and did not bring the "normality" they remembered from times before the war. The Nazi regime defined them based on racial principles and for Erna Schwarz as a Jew and Adolf Schwarz as an "Aryan" husband of a Jew, they were pushed into an unprivileged and persecuted group of society with both being deported to concentration camps. Practically right after the war, the re-established state of Czechoslovakia defined loyalty towards the country by deciding who could be and could not be a citizen, imposing another limitation upon people like the Schwarzes—the ethnic definition of citizenship. Arbitrary information about one's mother tongue—i.e., ethnicity—in the pre-war census, which was not a precondition to citizenship, became an obstacle in their claim to Czechoslovak citizenship. Many Jewish Holocaust survivors who grew up in traditionally German or Hungarian-speaking environments once again became second-rate citizens, or no citizens at all. On many occasions, official decisions pushed them into the same group with non-Jewish ethnic Germans and Hungarians, which were to be deported to Germany and Hungary. Only thanks to the efforts of renewed Jewish institutions, such as the Council of Jewish Communities in Bohemia and Moravia, they were successful-

49 ŠMOK, Tajemná smrt v Praze (manuscript).
50 ABS, f. 425 – Židovské organizace, b. 214, vol. 06, f. 0014, *Handwritten report*.

ly exempted from it happening. This accentuates the importance of such institutional representation for marginalized groups.

The paper outlines the state as a political power, which set quotas, regulations and bureaucratic obstacles as well as granted visas, permits and new/renewed citizenships. Those excluded from the right to citizenship had to navigate through a complicated framework set for them by laws and decrees. Their stateless status left the Schwarzes no other option but to look for possibilities to emigrate and transfer their loyalty to a new state. It forced them to adopt new strategies of how to stabilise their situation at home in the renewed state, to confirm their own acceptability on the local level—in the eyes of the state authorities, regional official bodies, former employers, the Jewish community etc., while at the same time seeking help outside the boundaries of the state—with intermediary organizations, in this case the JDC and its network, or relatives and acquaintances abroad.

With regard to everyday life and interaction with the authorities, the Schwarzes found themselves in a "schizophrenic" situation. On one hand they had to assure the Czechoslovak state bodies of their allegiance and loyalty, to portray themselves "worthy" of the Czechoslovak citizenship they had applied for, yet on the other hand, they endeavoured to assure the foreign guarantees and the destination state of their best intentions in the future.

With the changing climate of the Cold War and the political changes within Czechoslovakia after the February 1948 coup d'état, the couple's possibilities narrowed dramatically. The pressure of the state against the JDC and other organisations increased steadily and slowly made their activities impossible. It became harder to assist people in their emigration attempts and moreover, they had to conduct other activities illegally. All measures against the JDC were by proxy also steps taken by the state against its (former) Jewish citizens, which it had given up on and even used them as "hostages" in pressuring international institutions.

Records of the emigration process of this family case study end in September 1949. The JDC office in Prague closed at the beginning of 1950 with a message sent from Prague to the Paris headquarters: "All operations of the JDC in Czechoslovakia will cease on January 31, 1950, based on a formal request from the Czechoslovak authorities."[51] The JDC offices were sealed by the secret police and almost all paperwork was confiscated by the state secret police (Státní bezpečnost – StB). The JDC offices were, to a certain extent, shut down because it was a Jewish organisation which had helped the Jews of Czechoslovakia flee the country, but mainly because it was an agency from the United States of America. The decision was motivated by both anti-Semitism and a growing anti-Zionism, but also by the fact that throughout the Cold War, the US and its allies represented the absolute enemy of the communist regime.

Despite the presence of anti-Semitic tendencies on all levels of society in post-war Czechoslovakia, a significant number of citizens of Jewish descent were able to find employment in state apparatuses in the early years after liberation. These people could strengthen their political capital through their own personal histories—they were

51 Quoted from: ŠMOK, Tajemná smrt v Praze (manuscript).

members of Czechoslovak army units at the Western or Eastern front, fought in the Slovak National Uprising, etc. In light of these facts, the relationship of the official bodies towards Jews of German ethnicity was driven not only by anti-Semitism, but rather by an anti-German sentiment following six years of Nazi occupation. Even in this key question of returning citizenship to ethnic Germans, the decree of the government no. 252/1949 Sb. significantly eased the process. Although the mistrust of civil servants at the lesser regional departments still prevailed and the process was sabotaged, it improved at the beginning of 1950's with the circular letter distributed by the Ministry of Interior on "How to deal with the people of German minority",[52] considered the culminating development in the relationship towards the local Germans.

Regarding the relief organisations, even though they worked internationally, their function was limited by the rules and circumstances of the specific country and its internal political situation. The possibilities and limitations of such international institutions and their relationships with individuals offer a broad variety of topics for further exploration, for example in a comparative perspective within Central Europe—looking into the processes and work of the JDC and other institutions in Poland, Hungary or Romania. Comparing their inter-connectedness and coordination would shed more light on the complex and complicated involvement in this geographical space or further elaborate on the bridge between the institution and individual.

52 PETRÁŠ, René – NOVÁK, Petr. Nemecká menšina v Československu 1948–1989. In *Právněhistorické studie*, 2016, Vol. 46, No. 2, pp. 169-170.

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FORUM HISTORIAE

Conspiracy Theories and Rumours as Key Elements of Political Propaganda: The Cold War in the USA and Czechoslovakia in the 1950s

Zuzana Panczová

Abstract

PANCZOVÁ, Zuzana. Conspiracy Theories and Rumours as Key Elements of Political Propaganda: The Cold War in the USA and Czechoslovakia in the 1950s.

Rumours and hearsay can be important communication devices in civil society. Their influence tends to intensify in times of social crises and long-term conflict, which then can function as a test of trust in official authorities. The Cold War took place in an almost apocalyptic atmosphere fearing the outbreak of a fatal nuclear conflict. On both sides, combat was waged not only in the fields of armaments, economics or technology, but also on a psychological level, as a way to gain the trust and sympathy of citizens. The dividing line between East and West was also a demarcation between two frequently mirrored images of the enemy presented by representatives of state power and the state-controlled media. However, in contrast to official propaganda, there was also a less manageable spontaneous public debate, which responded to the intervention of state supervision, questioned official interpretations and sought its own answers to important social events. In this paper, the function of rumours and conspiracy theories during the Cold War is described on both sides of the conflict, as indicators of public opinion and as tools for influencing it. The "potato beetle" case and narratives about an alleged communist conspiracy in the USA during the period of "McCarthyism" became symbols of the conspiratorial rhetoric of the Cold War. The article also serves as a starting point for reflections on the differences in the spread of political rumours in totalitarian and democratic societies.

Keywords: rumours, conspiracy theories, trust, Cold War, propaganda, censorship, ideology, public opinion

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Introduction

Among personal relationships, trust is usually built through a series of positive experiences. A strong belief in one's partner or opposite party simplifies the decision-making process and helps to temper or prevent conflict. From a larger perspective, the level of large groups or whole societies, we can talk about trust and distrust in several contexts, one being faith in official institutions or the authorities of state power. An authority that does not have sufficient trust of its citizens must base its legitimacy on a restrictive and coercive means of rule, otherwise it risks collapse. Alongside traditional time dependant or content-restricted methods populations usually employ to express trust in their governments and policies (elections, referendums, opinion polls), rumours are among the oldest informal channels, invading communication lanes and contaminating social trust.

Rumours and hearsay exist in a broad spectrum of what is covered by the "proposition for belief that is unverified and in general circulation."[1] A special type of message

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1 ROSNOW, Ralph L. Psychology of Rumor Reconsidered. In *Psychological Bulletin*, 1980, Vol. 87, No. 3, p. 582.

conveyance similar to the rumour is the so-called conspiracy theory, which is related not so much in form as in content; replete with unverified information about dangerous conspiracies. Conspiracy theories can be thought of as a subgroup of rumours with similar subjects and the fact that categorical judgments cannot be made about the truth or accuracy of the information, claims or beliefs, is typical. In common language as well as in contemporary journalist jargon, the labels "rumour" and "conspiracy theory" predominantly evoke thoughts of lies, disinformation or nonsense. The very nature of a conspiracy theory suggests that certain competencies and resources that not everyone has at their disposal are necessary to actually uncover the plot. The majority of such tales can be considered misinformation due to the inherent ideological bias, inconsistency of judgments, lack of reality in the views,[2] and so on. Despite frequent factual inconsistencies, however, rumours and conspiracy theories are a valuable tool in understanding a group's collectively shared emotions, apprehensions, fears and desires. The gossip can be seen as a symbolic expression of trust or distrust towards the social system and its institutions.

According to social psychologist G. A. Fine:

> The examination of rumour reaches the heart of what it means to have a public sphere, a space of common discourse in which a community collectively judges whether truth claims are to be accepted and responded to [...]. Rumour both derives from and contributes to the social organization of trust.[3]

Fine points out that the mere existence of rumours indicates a breach of trust in official institutions, but also suggests some confidence in fellow citizens, or more accurately, in the informal and often anonymous channels through which rumours flow.

In reality however, attitudes, both outwardly but probably also internal, towards unverified reports vary. In addition to those who are adamantly convinced of the truthfulness of the information they are sharing, there is a broader group showing hesitation. Messages are usually passed on with caveats like, "I'm not certain if it's true" or "you'll have to form your own opinion". This is typical of rumours spread by known sources, as the content we offer to our closer circle of acquaintances directly impacts our personal reputation. Belief in rumours, conspiracy theories and gossip tends to stem from a variety of factors, mainly personally acquired knowledge and experience, but also a level of trust in the sources or the authorities mentioned. Trust towards the prevailing social atmosphere is also important, which can collectively influence shared feelings of anxiety, distrust or enthusiasm, and can have an effect on the rationality of our judgments.

During the Second World War, psychologist Robert H. Knapp devoted himself to research on rumours during times of war.[4] He started with a theory that rumours, like folklore, mythology or humour, provide members of a community with emotional satisfaction, serving a similar function to dreams and fantasies in fulfilling the personal desires of individuals. Knapp justified the fact that the spreading of rumours is more intense during wartime than in peacetime in part by censorship, which encourages a hunger for information, but also by the strong emotional toll that battles take on the population. As the basis for his analysis,

2 Particularly in the case of allegations around perfectly functioning global conspiracies lasting decades or centuries, or in cases of statements denying basic scientific knowledge.
3 FINE, Gary A. Rumor, Trust and Civil Society: Collective Memory and Cultures of Judgement. In *Diogenes*, 2007, Vol. 213, No. 1, pp. 6–7.
4 KNAPP, Robert H. A Psychology of Rumor. In *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1944, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 22–37.

he used a survey conducted by the Massachusetts Committee on Public Safety in September 1942 with the assistance of a public call mediated by publisher Reader's Digest. Knapp collected 1,089 rumours and divided them into categories based on the type of emotion that the rumour evokes. He created three basic groups: 1. The "Pipedream" or Wish Rumour, 2. The "Bogie" Rumour, and 3. The "Wedge-driving" or Aggression Rumour – the primary motivation being aggression or hatred. He determined that the greatest number of rumours came from the last group, and that these allegations especially implicated one's own party or allies,[5] which in Knapp's opinion, contributed to division and a weakening of loyalty. Too many wedge-driving rumours can be the first signs of a scapegoat mentality. These conclusions are inspiring in many ways, suggesting that in times of danger there is likely a very strong tendency in society to search for culprits within its own ranks.

In contrast to rumours spread spontaneously, controlled propaganda and misinformation, or deliberately spread false reports, aim to purposefully influence public opinion. Propaganda can be characterised as:

> The dissemination of information – facts, arguments, rumours, half-truths, or lies – to influence public opinion. Deliberateness and a relatively heavy emphasis on manipulation distinguish propaganda from casual conversation or the free and easy exchange of ideas."[6]

At its origin stands a specific group intending to utilise such fabrications as a means of achieving political and ideological goals.

The attraction to rumours and their impact on public opinion has been known for a long time. Both domestic and international power disputes were won not only through physical fighting with material weapons, but also thanks to an ability to disorient opponents and influence the mood of their armies and populations. Understanding the mechanisms proliferating the natural spread of rumours is also inspiring for the machinery of propaganda and disinformation. In times of danger, news about agitators and enemies hidden amongst one's own ranks is a powerful catalyst. The primary goal is to release information in such a way as to gain the public's trust. The public must then adopt it ideologically, identify with the message and act on it. What is important is that the recipients' trust is gained by confirming existing convictions, stereotypes, moral or ideological clichés, etc. Former Czech intelligence officer and State Security agent Ladislav Bittman (who later lectured at Boston University after emigration) emphasised the role of self-deception when describing prerequisites for the success of disinformation campaigns:

> Self-deception is a very important psychological factor in disinformation mechanisms. The perpetrator consciously tries to get the victim to the point of being caught in the fraud by using language and arguments that are in line with his or her prejudices and moods.[7]

5 Of interest is Knapp's footnote that surprisingly few rumours contained anti-Russian content, (0.6%) (KNAPP 1944, p. 26).

6 SMITH, Bruce L. Propaganda. In *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2016, https://www.britannica.com/topic/propaganda [last viewed on 11 October 2021]. This definition of propaganda comes from the Institute for Propaganda Analysis inspired by Harold Laswell as "the expression of opinions or actions carried out deliberately by individuals or groups with a view towards influencing the opinions or actions of other individuals or groups for predetermined ends and through psychological manipulations." KELLEN, Konrad. Introduction by Konrad Kellen. In ELLUL, Jacques (ed.) *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*. Translated from French by Konrad Kellen and Jean Lerner. New York : Vintage Books, 1973, p. xi–xii.

7 BITTMAN, Ladislav. *Mezinárodní dezinformace, černá propaganda, aktivní opatření a tajné akce*. Praha : Mladá fronta, 2000, p. 29.

This means strengthening the distrust and fear towards those whom the propaganda labels as a political enemy, and conversely, bolstering trust and loyalty towards those who are in the position of protector or liberator.

The Cold War period maintained an atmosphere of constant preparation for military conflict accompanied by intense propaganda as well as the spontaneous spread of suspicion of war preparations or possible "Trojan horses" and infiltration by enemy agents. This was true for both sides during the conflict. Periods of normal tension alternated with times of crisis threatened by open war and signals of retaliation.

In this article, some relatively well-known conspiracy theories that were conceived for the purposes of internal and foreign political propaganda are analysed. These are classic parables that became symbols of the start of the Cold War. Historical experience indicates that conspiracy theories spread both in liberal democracies embracing freedom of the press as well as dictatorships with systematic censorship. They are an integral part of political rhetoric, reacting to or taking advantage of universal human concerns about threats to life, health, property, or moral and religious values and traditions.

The crisis of trust between the world's superpowers battling for post-war spheres of influence was a direct effort to gain the loyalty of their own citizens by emphasising the impending sense of danger and vulnerability. Aside from news channels, a politically motivated fear of both external and internal enemies spread to the artefacts of popular culture. What kind of impact this had on informal, word-of-mouth communication is difficult to reconstruct today. The focus here will remain on the question of what parallels can be found in the spread, defence or questioning of known conspiracy theories regarding both internal and external enemies in the early stages of the Cold War on both sides. Research is based on period news and popular sources, as well as expert knowledge on political rumours and conspiracy theories.

The Great Red Scare in the USA

The term "Red Scare" originally signified a fear about the growing number and influence of communism and anarchism supporters in the period after the First World War. By the end of the 1950s, fears of Soviet agents operating through branches of the Communist Party in the USA were recast into an atmosphere of the "Great Red Scare" or the "Second Red Scare", or simply "McCarthyism" after Senator Joseph McCarthy. Suspicions of sinister activities by communist agents were publicised in the first years after the end of the Second World War leading to preventive legal measures.[8]

Katharina Thalmann, an expert in American studies, focuses on the change in standing of conspiracy theories from legitimate to illegitimate knowledge, which in the opinion of several authors, was rooted in the disproportionate reaction to fears of a communist conspiracy at the start of the Cold War. Thalmann provides several examples from popular culture in the form of propaganda illustrations by the communist conspiracy in the United States.[9]

8 The most significant was Executive Order 9 835 by President Harry S. Truman, which for the first time introduced a review of the loyalty of government officials to prevent communist agents from acting in a government administration, National Archives, https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/executive-orders/1947.html [last viewed on 11 October 2021].

9 THALMANN, Katharina. *The Stigmatization of Conspiracy Theory Since the 1950s. "A Plot to Make us Look Foolish"*. New York : Routledge, 2019, pp. 80–94.

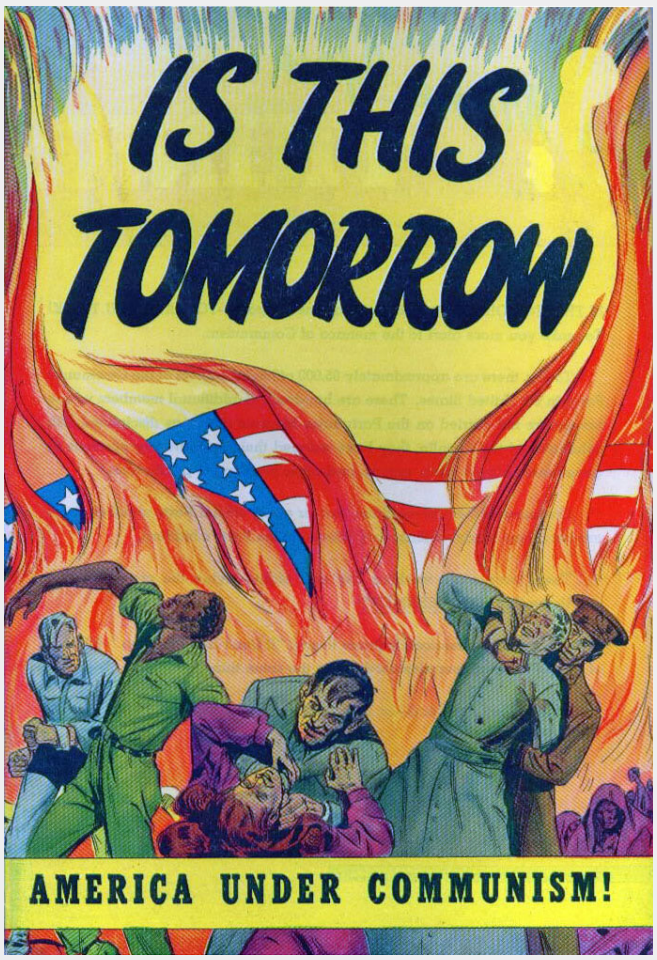

Image 1. Cover of the anti-communist propaganda comic

One such anti-communist comic, published in 1947, is called *Is This Tomorrow. America Under Communism!*[10]

The preface claims that there are 85 thousand official members of the Communist Party in the USA. The identity of further members is unknown because they are part of the fifth column of the Kremlin and "they have wormed their way into key positions in government offices, trade unions, and other positions of public trust."[11]

Based on a fictional retrospective narrative of members of the Communist Party, the pamphlet reveals the strategies by which the Communists came to power in the USA, claiming they took advantage of the economic crisis and under the pretext of creating a front against fascism or intolerance, succeeded in gaining support of the media as well as some famous names. It further states that while a social crisis was provoked by sowing religious, racial and class divisions, the country was hit by a wave of strikes and the unions helped Communists seize power. Rigged elections followed, as did the transport of inconvenient people to labour camps, the confiscation of property, censorship and the spread of propaganda in schools, resulting in children reporting parents to agents of the Kremlin.[12] A single year was enough for the Communists to obtain power. In conclusion, the pamphlet emphasises that the Communists utilised the same methods to rise to power in other countries: "It happened in Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and country after country, the world over. It is their plan for America." The reader is ultimately called upon to take personal responsibility in the fight against the Communists. He/she must know their methods, because "you are the one with whom the Communist is struggling right now."[13]

10 Four million copies were published by a church community. Some were intended for sale, but the rest were distributed free of charge to the public and other church groups. MURRAY, Chris. Cold War. In BOOKER, M. Keith (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Comic Books and Graphic Novels*. Vol. 1, Santa Barbara : Greenwood, 2010, pp. 104–109, https://pdfhive.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Encyclopedia-of-Comic-Books-and-Graphic-Novels-PDFhive.com-.pdf [last viewed on 11 October 2021]

11 Is This Tomorrow 1947.

12 It is possible that the propagandist story of the Soviet children's "martyr" Pavel T. Morozov was the inspiration. According to Soviet literature, thirteen-year-old "Pavlik" Morozov betrayed his father's office for hiding grain subject to forced purchase and his grandfather killed him in revenge. The story was produced in various media, intended to encourage the devotion of children and young people to the beliefs of communist ideology, which should be superior to family ties. The murder of P. T. Morozov (1918–1932) actually happened, but its truth was far from this contrived story. KELLY, Catriona. *Comrade Pavlik: The Rise and Fall of a Soviet Boy Hero*. London : Granta Books, 2005.

13 Is This Tomorrow, 1947.

The loudest and most visible rhetoric came from Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy, who sounded the alarm against an unseen network of communist conspirators undermining the United States from all sides – in economics, politics, the military, culture and health – personifying the "Great Red Scare". He delivered a shocking speech on 9 February 1950, warning against homegrown traitors: "While I cannot take the time to name all the men in the State Department who have been named as members of the Communist Party and members of a spy ring, I have here in my hand a list of 205".[14] In a speech on 14 June 1951, he named US Secretary of State George C. Marshall as the central figure of the conspiracy, and cautioned:

> How can we account for our present situation unless we believe that men high in this Government are concerting to deliver us to disaster? This must be the product of a great conspiracy, a conspiracy on a scale so immense as to dwarf any previous such venture in the history of man. A conspiracy of infamy so black that, when it is finally exposed, its principals shall be forever deserving of the maledictions of all honest men. […] What can be made of this unbroken series of decisions and acts contributing to the strategy of defeat? They cannot be attributed to incompetence. […] What is the objective of the great conspiracy? I think it is clear from what has occurred and is now occurring: to diminish the United States in world affairs, to weaken us militarily, to confuse our spirit with talk of surrender in the Far East and to impair our will to resist evil. To what end? To the end that we shall be contained, frustrated and finally: fall victim to Soviet intrigue from within and Russian military might from without.[15]

The goal of Communists infiltrating into state administration was said to be the rise of the Soviets over the United States.[16] Anti-communist rhetoric of the 1950s in the United States greatly emphasised key elements of American democracy and stressed individuality in comparison with Soviet totalitarianism. Fears of a communist conspiracy, however, ultimately led state representatives to violate the personal rights they were supposed to protect.

Worries of pro-Soviet agents in the USA were not entirely unfounded. Research into Soviet archives in the 1990s showed that the Communist Party of the USA (CPUSA) did receive financial support directly from Moscow, from its founding in 1919 until 1989,[17] and its members also engaged in espionage. Communist ideology attracted a quite a broad demographic of US citizens, including scientists, officials and artists.[18]

The problem with spreading a fear of communists lay especially in the difficulty of identification. According to then Attorney General J. Howard McGrath, the communist was "everywhere – in factories, offices, butcher shops, on street corners, in private businesses – each carries with him the germs of death."[19] Thus, anyone could be labelled a communist,

14 "Communists in Government Service," McCarthy Says. United States Senate, 9 February 1950. https://www.senate.gov/about/powers-procedures/investigations/mccarthy-hearings/communists-in-government-service.htm [last viewed on 11 October 2021]

15 Speech delivered by Senator Joseph McCarthy before the Senate on 14 June 1951. Modern History Sourcebook: Senator Joseph McCarthy: The History of George Catlett Marshall, 1951. https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1951mccarthy-marshall.asp [last viewed on 11 October 2021]

16 More about this in SCHRECKER, Elle. *The Age of McCarthyism: A Brief History with Documents*. 2nd ed. Boston : Bedford, 2002, pp. 240–41. Cit. after THALMANN 2019, p. 43.

17 KLEHR, Harvey – HAYNES, John Earl –ANDERSON, Kyrill M. *The Soviet World of American Communism*. New Haven : Yale University Press, 1989, pp. 74, 148; BITTMAN 2000, p. 53.

18 PIPES, Daniel. *Spiknutí. Názory a teorie*. Z anglického originálu preložila Daria Dvořáková. Praha : Themis, 2003, p. 143.

19 KNIGHT, Peter. *Conspiracy Culture. From Kennedy to the X Files*. London; New York : Routledge, 2000, p. 169.

and the communist conspiracy could be anything that upset public opinion. The rhetoric of disseminating fear employed a metaphor of an attack on the "body" of American politics by comparing communism to an infection and parasites.[20] McCarthy's frequent, ill-founded allegations, which cost people their jobs and reputations, and his clear abuse of the fear of communists used specifically to eliminate political opponents brought increasingly negative reactions from his own supporters. As a result, people became aware of the use of conspiracy theories in a pejorative and pathological way. A well-known report by American historian Richard Hofstadter in 1964 explains the "paranoid style" – the equivalent effect of conspiracy theories – using one of Senator McCarthy's anti-communist speeches as an example. Hofstadter's thesis was that "The paranoid style is an old and recurrent phenomenon in our public life which has been frequently linked with movements of suspicious discontent."[21] In his opinion, the feeling of being deprived of ownership of America was unique to the paranoid style of the modern right. Old American virtues were supposedly destroyed by cosmopolitans and intellectuals, while capitalism was being dismantled by socialists and communists. Thus, outsiders or foreigners were no longer the only suspected conspirators, but people in the highest places.[22]

Fluoride in the Drinking Water in the USA as a Communist Conspiracy

A panicked warning about the ubiquity of the communist conspiracy in the United States came in the form of campaigns against fluoridation, the addition of fluoride to drinking water to reduce tooth decay. This time, the fear of communists was associated with public anxiety over the consequences of the mass use of chemicals. Robert J. Johnston describes how in the 1950s, public health and dentistry experts in favour of fluoridation were shocked by the reaction of groups fighting against their efforts. They were unable to comprehend the counter-reasoning and could not stop the anti-fluoridation campaigns, which found success with voters as well as local politicians. This was due to the ability of campaign spokespersons to link the fluoridation of water to political and social issues in the United States.[23] The potential negative effects of fluoride on human health or the environment were useful arguments, but religious and political reasons were equally important. Opponents of fluoridation among conservatives noted a restriction of individual freedom in the process and saw fluoridation as a prelude to more serious programmes, such as birth control or control of people's minds. Some conservatives were even convinced that fluoridation was a communist conspiracy to destroy America, that the fluoride was intended to be a means of killing or paralysing millions of Americans enabling a Soviet invasion. Similar positions were taken not only by lay people, but by some doctors too, such as Dr. Charles Betts, a dentist from Ohio who also fought against vaccinations and the pasteurisation of food. He claimed that fluoridation was being promoted by the aluminium industry, which he said was in the service of the communists. In his view, fluoridation should be "better than using the atom bomb because the atom bomb has to be made, has to be transported to the place

20 KNIGHT 2000.
21 HOFSTADTER, Richard. The Paranoid Style in American Politics. In *Harper's Magazine*, November 1964, pp. 77–78.
22 HOFSTADTER 1964, p. 81.
23 JOHNSTON, Robert D. *The Politics of Healing.* New York; London : Routledge, 2004, p. 132.

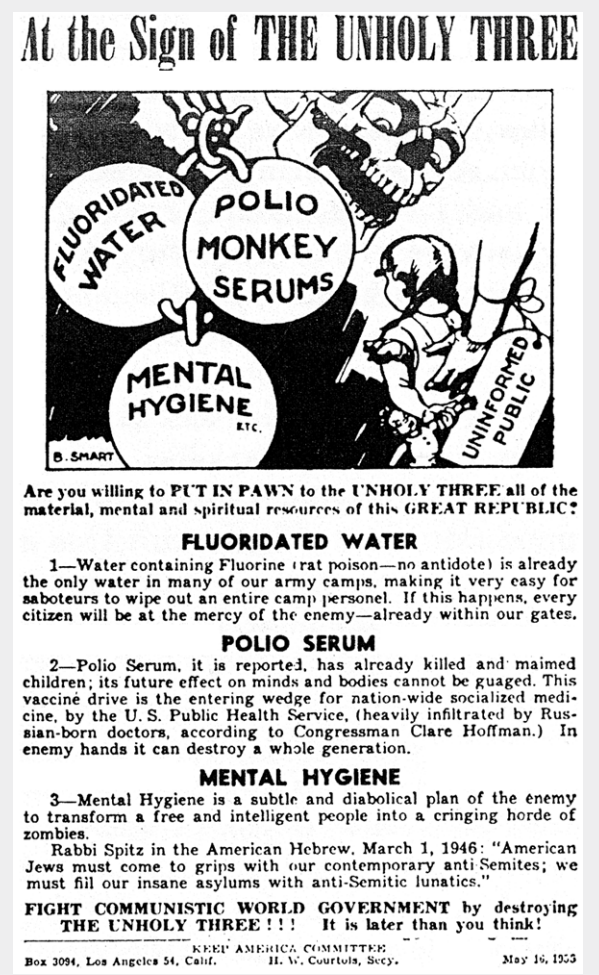

Image 2. "At the Sign of the UNHOLY THREE", a flier issued in the 1950s–60s to promote hygiene as an anti-communist goal. Source: Wikimedia Com-

it is to be set off while poisonous fluorine has been placed right beside the water supplies by the Americans themselves ready to be dumped into the water mains whenever a Communist desires!"[24]

Fears of a Third World War in Czechoslovakia after 1948

The communist coup in 1948 meant a definitive incorporation of Czechoslovakia into the Soviet sphere of influence, which also meant adopting Soviet propaganda methods for political influence. Several authors have pointed out similarities between Hitler and Stalin's propaganda, exploiting accusations of imaginary conspiracies in order to strengthen power and legalise violence. The state terrorism of German Nazism and Soviet Stalinism was born directly from theories of international conspiracy against the regimes.[25]

Freedom of the press in socialist dictatorships was limited by censorship, which concealed or ignored selected information or on the contrary, altered or directly fabricated information based on the needs of the government. Public awareness of such intense, state-controlled censorship also had the opposite effect, however, which supported the resonance of unofficially spread rumours, suspicions and alternative interpretations of official press releases.[26] In communist Czechoslovakia, developing a climate of fear around the activity of class enemies, both internal and external, became an integral part of state propaganda used to legitimise political reprisals. The misuse of this tactic politically was permissible mainly by the ambiguity of the term "class enemy", which could be taken to mean practically anyone.[27] Propaganda hysteria in

24 JOHNSTON 2004, p. 137.
25 See, for example, TUCKER, Robert C. *Stalin in Power: The Revolution from Above, 1928-1941*. New York : Norton, 1990, p. 591.
26 For more detail, see ZAVACKÁ, Marína. Whispered Rumor as a Kind of Independent Political News Service in Slovakia in 1953: People and State Reacting to the Death of J. V. Stalin and Klement Gottwald. In *Slovak Contributions to the 19th International Congress of Historical Sciences.* Bratislava : Veda; Historický ústav SAV, 2000, pp. 229–240; ZAVACKÁ, Marína. A čo píšu, bude vojna? Propagandistické využívanie pocitu ohrozenia v studenej vojne. In ŠTEFANSKÝ, Michal – PURDEK, Imrich (eds.) *Slovensko vo vojnách a v konfliktoch v 20. storočí.* Bratislava : Vojenský historický ústav, 2003, pp. 233–238; ZAVACKÁ, Marína. *Kto žije za ostnatým drôtom? Oficiálna zahraničnopolitická propaganda na Slovensku 1956 – 1962: teórie, politické smernice a spoločenská prax.* Bratislava : Veda, 2005.
27 VEŠELSKÁ, Natália. Strach – nástroj moci. Manipulovateľnosť spoločnosti počas komunistického režimu. In BYSTRICKÝ, Valerián – ROGUĽOVÁ, Jaroslava (eds.) *Storočie propagandy*. Bratislava : AEP, 2005, p. 182.

Image 3. Viliam Weisskopf: "…and everyone takes its own! On the newspaper report on the division of Berlin into two cities." [Figures with attributes of Nazism and militarism go to the "western zone" and peaceful citizens to the "eastern zone"]. In *Roháč*, 6 December 1948.

Czechoslovakia escalated in the form of political "monster trials" against supposedly anti-state conspirators and collaborators from the West.[28]

The media also supported the creation of a polarised world by emphasising the moral differences of the West and the East. In the post-war image of the West, embodied mainly by the United States, violence, debauchery, military harassment and social injustice were accentuated.[29] Militarism was characterised in communist propaganda as directly linked to German Nazism, another feature highlighted in their projected image of the West. In the words of Andrej Švec, author of a publication on political caricature in Slovakia, Slovak foreign policy after the end of the Second World War created "a series of strong and concentrated attacks on representatives of imperialism, prosecuted political representatives of West Germany, revealing their hereditary relationship with Hitler... and pointed to the militaristic face of Western democracy."[30] Viliam Weisskopf, for example, was an important creator of Slovak foreign policy caricature of this time, working in the magazine *Roháč*.

The Colorado Potato Beetle – A Symbol of Eastern Propaganda in the 1950s

Constant suspicion of a potential "Trojan horse" infiltrated by an enemy agent at this time led to a conspiracy theory about the Colorado potato beetle, popularly called the "mandelinka" in Czechoslovakia. The pest arrived in western Europe from the American continent for the first time in the second half of the 19th century in potato shipments. Waves of infestations occurred in France during the First World War and then in Germany in the mid-1930s. The Slovak press even issued warnings about the possible introduction of the potato beetle into local fields at the end of the 1930s, urging people to report every occurrence to the authorities.[31] In 1946, the Czechoslovak press again highlighted the presence of the potato beetle in the fields of Austria, noting it was thus only a matter of time before the nuisance crossed the Czechoslovak border. In 1950, when the beetle population massively exploded in the German Democratic Republic

28 The most famous was the proceedings against Milada Horáková.
29 PANCZOVÁ, Zuzana. The Image of the West in Conspiracy Theories in Slovakia and its Historical Context. In *Electronic Journal of Folklore*, 2017, Vol. 22, No. 3, p. 61–62.
30 ŠVEC, Andrej. *Bič smiechu. Politická karikatúra na Slovensku (1861 – 1985).* Bratislava : Tatran, 1988, p. 86.
31 Pohotovosť proti mandelinke zemiakovej. In *Slovenský hlas*, 10 December 1938, p. 8; Boj proti mandelinke zemiakovej. In *Slovák*, 30 September 1941, p. 8.

(GDR), Czechoslovakia and Poland, an atmosphere of heightened tensions between the USA and the USSR justified more propaganda. Eyewitness reports of American planes were found in the GDR and the local Minister of Agriculture, Paul Mercker, officially accused the USA of releasing potato beetles in Europe. The Czechoslovak government joined in, issuing a statement on 28 June 1950 asserting:

> Boxes and flasks filled with this beetle were also found. All this is irrefutable proof that the current mandelinka danger could not have occurred in a natural and usual way, but that this dangerous pest was brought to us artificially, intentionally and en masse using the clouds and winds by the Western imperialists, as well as by their destructive agents sent to us.[32]

The notion that the outbreak in Central Europe was caused by dropping beetles from American planes was, according to contemporary observers, absurd for many people, but it had a lot of support in a massive media campaign. The beetle was colourfully depicted as an insatiable imperialist "American beetle" and a "Wall Street parasite". The appropriate antithesis to the malicious Western planes in propaganda rhetoric was the USSR's airborne reinforcements, which protected socialist agriculture by spraying DDT.[33] Soviet sources were the inspiration for press campaigns in Czechoslovakia and Soviet articles on this topic were often quoted in their entirety. On 29 July 1950, the magazine *Týždeň* (The Week) published an article entitled, "Literaturnaja gazeta o šestinohom poslovi Wal Streetu" [Literature gazette on Wall Street's six-legged messenger], interpreting an article by writer Gennady Fish who claimed that the USA had sent seeds infected with harmful insects and other pests to the USSR during both the Second World War and as part of the 1946 United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration international operation.[34]

Image 4. US planes drop potato beetles over socialist fields. In Roháč 11 June 1950. Source: Author's archive.

In addition to printed news, the scandal of the "American Beetle" was also communicated to the general public in Czechoslovakia through leaflets and documentary films. Aside

32 Provolání vlády k boji proti mandelince bramborové. In *Rudé právo*, 29 June 1950, p. 1.
33 For example: Sovietski letci pomáhajú nám ničiť amerického chrobáka. Reportážne zábery so sovietskym poručíkom letectva Petrom Michajlovičom Ossipovom. In *Týždeň*, 14 July 1951, Vol. 6, No. 28, p. 7.
34 Literaturnaja gazeta o šestinohom poslovi Wall Streetu. In *Týždeň*, 29 July 1950, Vol. 5, No. 30, p. 4.

from the illustrated agitprop for children, *O zlém brouku bramborouku* (1950) [About the Evil Potato Beetle],[35] a short film was made called *Mandelinka bramborová* (1950) [The Potato Mandelinka], which described the details of "the most recent criminal tool of American barbarism", and a year later, *Boj proti mandelince bramborové* (1951) [Fight against the Potato Beetle] was produced about the aid provided by Soviet pilots to Czechoslovak farmers. Accusations of the deliberate distribution of the beetle by Western capitalists, however, had appeared in an educational film documentary about the insect entitled *Škůdce* [Pest] as early as 1949, the production of which was commissioned to the Czechoslovak state film company by the Ministry of Agriculture. It even won a National Prize in 1950 for the production an important popular science film.[36] Movements condemning the attack of the American imperialists also included the "spontaneous" distribution of outraged civic resolutions.[37]

It is difficult today to recreate how convincing this campaign was for the public at the time. It likely depended to a great extent on one's loyalty to communist ideology, however, several contemporary observers admit in their memoirs the possibility that airborne paratroopers coordinated by the United States were responsible for the excessive reproduction of the potato beetle. One of them acknowledged its veracity with respect to other similar cases of aviation diversionary activity from the West. This was specifically about releasing balloons with propaganda flyers from West Germany, organised by the National Committee for a Free Europe – events like the Winds of Freedom (1951), Prospero (1953) and Veto (1954).[38] It is also possible to find similar arguments in online discussions of related articles.

Deliberation of the possible use of a beetle to destroy an enemy country's crops surfaced in France during the First World War. During the Second World War, the Germans suspected that the Allies would use the beetle as a biological weapon. This was the impetus for conducting experiments to confirm whether such a biological attack would even be possible and whether it could be used in the United Kingdom. For these purposes, a special "Kartoffelkäferforschungsinstitut" [Potato Beetle Research Institute] was even set up to test the success of dropping beetles from an aircraft.[39]

Though the Central European scandal around the beetle was not resolved by any clear proof of Western sabotage and today generates more laughter than anything else, there is a parallel with similar accusations of the use of biological weapons in the Korean War (1950-1953). The cases are related not only in terms of timing, but also propaganda. There, the campaign against the potato beetle began three days after the North

35 Children were encouraged to collect potato beetles as part of mass brigades: "Oh, if they could only destroy all our potato crops. They would rejoice: 'We have fulfilled the task given to us by the lords of the West. There will be no potatoes in the Czechoslovak Republic!' No, we won't! Entire expeditions of children will go to save our harvest. They will inspect all the potato bushes from below to see if they can find eggs on the back of the leaves." SEKORA, Ondřej. *O zlém brouku Bramborouku. O mandelince bramborové, která chce loupit z našich talířů*. Praha : Státní nakladatelství dětské knihy, 1950.

36 Filmový přehled, https://www.filmovyprehled.cz/cs/film/401661/skudc [last viewed on 11 October 2021]

37 A detailed description of the campaign to combat the beetle in Czechoslovakia is given by the study FORMÁNKOVÁ, Pavlína. Kampaň proti „americkému brouku" a její politické souvislosti. In *Paměť a dějiny,* 2008, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 22–38. https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/pamet-dejiny/0801-22-38.pdf [last viewed on 11 October 2021]

38 TOMEK, Prokop. *Balony svobody: letákové operace Svobodné Evropy 1951–1956*. Cheb : Svět křídel, 2014.

39 GARRETT, Benjamin C. The Colorado Potato Beetle Goes to War. In *Chemical Weapons Convention Bulletin* 33, September 1996, Historical Note no. 2, p. 2–3. http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/spru/hsp/documents/CW-CB33-Garrett.pdf [last viewed on 11 October 2021]

Korean army invaded South Korea. In the scope of war propaganda, the United States was accused of spreading a biological disease by dropping infected insects into Korean territory. The first, vague allegations were made by North Korea and China as early as 1951. China and North Korea also accused the US of spreading infection at the beginning of 1952, when outbreaks of smallpox, cholera and plague occurred among members of the Chinese volunteer army fighting for North Korea. These allegations were confirmed by captured US pilots, who later revoked their statements claiming they were forced and a result of torture. Research in Soviet archives in the 1990s, published by Kathryn Weathersby and Milton Leitenberg as part of the International History Project at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, supports statements that the accusations against the USA by North Korea, China and the USSR were a planned disinformation campaign.[40]

Conclusion

The competition for military, economic and moral superiority over combatants on opposite sides of the Iron Curtain through the abundant use of propaganda lasted for four decades and we are still feeling the reverberations today. Conspiracy theories as an element of propaganda mirrored fears about the real threat of another global conflict, but they were also a tool used to legitimise current government power. Employed at the beginning of the Cold War, they were evidence of the climate of fear over a new war. The result was a wave of propaganda-based scapegoating and the promotion of conspiracies in countries with strong traditions of liberal democracy, though also within the environments of censorship-controlled dictatorships. Propaganda sought to gain trust by stoking normal human fears about threats to life, health, property or morals. In the case of the Cold War, this brought on a revival of the simplified and often stereotyped polarized image of the world typical for propaganda in a "hot" war conflict. The crisis of trust between superpowers sharing post-war spheres of influence was linked to efforts to gain the loyalty of citizens by emphasising a sense of danger. An important element was also that in addition to fabricated, exaggerated or unsubstantiated claims, conspiracy theories contained information about genuine threats; the real existence of Soviet agents in the USA, the real threat of exaggerated chemical attacks, existing experiments with biological weapons, etc. The eventual fate of the aforementioned propaganda activities is also interesting. In the case of the hunt for communists in the USA, under the influence of the free press and pressure from academic and political elites, there was a reflective response against the misuse of conspiracy theories. Similar public criticism was not expressed in communist regimes.

Impulsively spread politically based rumours, conspiracy theories, disinformation and propaganda are key components of political reality. Many established disinformation

40 WEATHERSBY, Kathryn. Deceiving the Deceivers: Moscow, Beijing, Pyongyang, and the Allegations of Bacteriological Weapons Use in Korea. In *Cold War International History Project*. Bulletin 11, Winter 1998, p. 176–184. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/publication/CWIHP_Bulletin_11.pdf [last viewed on 11 October 2021]; LEITENBERG, Milton. New Russian Evidence on the Korean War Biological Warfare Allegations: Background and Analysis. In *Cold War International History Project*. Bulletin 11, Winter 1998, p. 185–199. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/publication/CWIHP_Bulletin_11.pdf [last viewed on 11 October 2021]

"tricks" have been repeated throughout history, others have been gradually improved thanks to new knowledge. The current capabilities of the Internet present a significant accelerator for misinformation. Information was and will continue to be a strategic matter, and the control or free dissemination has been and will continue to be part of public debate and covert policies. There is no simple guide to reliably distinguishing true information from misinformation, but an awareness of propaganda campaigns from the past undoubtedly helps.

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FORUM HISTORIAE

"Here a prosecutor fraternizes with a smuggler." Complicated Links Between the Mountains, Economics and Ideology

Jerzy Kochanowski

Abstract

KOCHANOWSKI, Jerzy. "Here a prosecutor fraternizes with a smuggler." Complicated Links Between the Mountains, Economics and Ideology.

The conclusion of the state commissioned report addressed to Zakopane in 1972 was: "in Zakopane, the state is in a position worse than in capitalism. It has been reduced to the role of not even a night-watchman, but that of an unpaid street-sweeper". This peculiar "autonomy" of the Podhale Region was affected by historical, social, cultural and geographical conditions that are commonly mentioned, though on the other hand, the state was also an important actor and nowise ambiguous. The tendency to take up strict supervision of sectors decisive for the image and importance of Zakopane and the Tatra region—tourism and sport—existed at the central level from the mid-1950s to the 1980s, but at the regional level, these policies encountered strong resistance. The reason was an emergence of specific social networks linking the private sector with the structures of local government, state and party, or even with the police and judicial departments, however, only thanks to them was it possible—due to the organizational inefficiency of the state—to fulfil a societal need for the modernization of leisure and related services, which grew suddenly after 1956. Only in the first half of the 1970s was the socialist state able to provide a relatively rational program thanks to being an influential factor in modernization, mostly due to maintaining control of material resources. However, in the period of disintegration of the system, the end of the 1970s and in the 1980s, the state's program was no longer a barrier or alternative for the social actors.

Keywords: Zakopane, Podhale region, tourism, private sector, social networks, 1956–1970, Polish United Worker's Party

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"That the Waluś family were persecuted in Poland, that they had to flee the country and that Kuba saved the world from communism was something we learned a few years later. I have to admit I was stunned when I read those incredible lies. They were very well-off and concentrated on their own business and money. They kowtowed to the commies, were making the most of life and there was no ideology there."[1] That "Kuba", an idol of today's extreme right in Poland, is Janusz Jakub Waluś. In 1981, he emigrated to South Africa, where he later killed leader of the South African Communist Party Chris Hani in 1993. In the construction of Waluś' legend[2] by the extremists, an important factor

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1 ŁAZAREWICZ, Cezary. Janusz Waluś, historia rodzinna mordercy antykomunisty. "Mimo bogactwa zawsze mieli otwarte serce". In *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 11 May 2020, https://wyborcza.pl/alehistoria/7,121681,25697735,-janusz-walus-bananowy-mlodzieniec-ktory-zostal-morderca-na.html [last viewed: 7 October 2021]. For more see ŁAZAREWICZ, Cezary. *Nic osobistego. Sprawa Janusza Walusia*, Katowice : Wydawnictwo Sonia Draga, 2019.

2 ŁAZAREWICZ 2019; GRELA, Szymon. Rasista Waluś w Polsce. Jak polska prawica polubiła mordercę. In *OKO. Press*, 21 April 2017, https://oko.press/rasista-walus-polsce-polska-prawica-polubila-morderce/ [last viewed 7 October 2021]; KORZYCKI, Radosław. Janusz Waluś, Heros kiboli i prawicy. In *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 26 May 2017, https://wyborcza.pl/magazyn/7,124059,21870313,janusz-walus-heros-kiboli-i-prawicy.html [last viewed: on 7 October 2021].

legitimising his anti-communist stance was the mere fact that he was born in Zakopane, in the Tatra Mountains (1953). His parents, however, were not highlanders but the so-called "cepry", or lowlanders from other regions of the country and the guest house they ran was not so much a source of income but a convenient platform for interaction with government authorities. Its guests included VIPs from both Kraków and Warsaw, which undoubtedly made it easier, especially in the Stalinist period, for the family businesses to survive, both the inn and private factories run by Waluś's father. It was also no coincidence that Janusz Waluś' godmother was the daughter of Kiejstut Żemaitis, a communist dignitary, who in 1949–1959 was in charge of Poland's heavy industry.[3]

The above, by no means unique, example shows how far removed from reality the stereotypical, simplified picture of relations was between the government and society in the years 1945–1989, a distinct image rooted in the collective memory and reproduced in journalism and historical narratives. Even in the case of the highlanders from the Podhale region, who are commonly believed to have been in organisational and political conflict with the communist state,[4] the true scope of their relationship was much broader, varied and sometimes surprising in its forms. The authors of a 1972 party report even noted that "in Zakopane, the state is in a position worse than under capitalism. It has been reduced to the role of not even a night-watchman, but of an unpaid street sweeper."[5] In all socialist countries, quite sizeable space existed in which the state, more or less (un)intentionally and (un) consciously, left the citizens some room for manoeuvre, while a host of social actors—private and institutional—blended the communist system's behavioural logic with their own interests, goals and values, choosing among the norms imposed on them from above those which they could adopt for their own benefit, without much personal harm.[6] This required both sides to cross the boundaries of ideology, norms or law, to be ready for far-reaching compromises and be willing to engage in unique, informal negotiations marking—often unconsciously and spontaneously—the boundaries of mutual concessions, and ultimately to tacitly relinquish mutual prejudices and establish some—unverbalised—trust. The following remarks on Zakopane and its surroundings focus on the most characteristic and interlinked spheres of ideology and economics. It is no coincidence that the title lacks a detailed timeframe; while the article focuses on the period of 1956–1970, it also tackles earlier and later threads.[7]

The uniqueness of the Podhale region and Zakopane, stressed even in party documents, was and continues to be, a consequence of the peculiarities of communities living in high

3 ŁAZAREWICZ 2020.

4 KORKUĆ, Maciej. Podziemie niepodległościowe pod Tatrami 1945–1949. In ZACHARKO, Jerzy (ed.) *Drogi do Niepodległości. Polska, Podhale, Zakopane 1945–1989*. Zakopane : Gmina Miasto Zakopane, 2005, pp. 13–46; Niepodległość pod wierchami. Z Maciejem Korkuciem i Wojciechem Szatkowskim rozmawia Dawid Golik. In *Biuletyn IPN*, No. 1–2, 2010, pp. 3–18.

5 KOCHANOWSKI, Jerzy. Socjalizm na halach, czyli "Patologia stosunków społeczno-ekonomicznych i politycznych w Zakopanem" (1972). In *Przegląd Historyczny*, 2007, Vol. 98, No. 1, p. 86.

6 See *Przegląd Historyczny,* 2018, Vol. 109, No. 4, devoted entirely to the "room for manoeuvre" in the Polish People's Republic, Czechoslovakia, Romania and German Democratic Republic, http://www.przegladhistoryczny.pl/content/przegl%C4%85d-historyczny-t-cix-2018-z-4 [last viewed: 1 July 2020].

7 I tackle the problem of relations between the government and society in the Podhale region in e.g. KOCHANOWSKI, Jerzy. "Wolne miasto?". Nieco inne spojrzenie na Zakopane Władysława Gomułki, 1956–1970. In *Przegląd Historyczny*, 2018, Vol. 109, No. 4, pp. 611–649; KOCHANOWSKI, Jerzy. "Złudzenie, ale jakże przyjemne" czyli stalinizm w Zakopanem. In HRYCIUK, Grzegorz – RUCHNIEWICZ, Małgorzata – SREBRAKOWSKI, Aleksander (eds.) *Spojrzenia nie tylko na wschód. Od Dolnego Śląska po Syberię. XX wiek w historii, historiografii i naukach politycznych*. Toruń : Adam Marszałek, 2019, pp. 341–353; KOCHANOWSKI, Jerzy. *"Wolne miasto?". Zakopane 1956–1970*. Kraków : ZNAK, 2019.

mountains all over the world, communities often radically different in historical, economic, ethnic or ethnographic, political or cultural terms from their lowland compatriots.[8] In the characteristically peripheral mountain regions, the state and its institutions were something remote, less important than one's own surroundings, local community and extended family. This limited the control on the part of the political centre led to the highlanders' weaker identification with state symbols, and at the same time amplified the role of local dialects, customs or dress as identifying features. From the perspective of the usually lowland centre, mountain communities were seen as backwards and conservative. This was usually true, though at the same time a typical frontier nature coupled with prominent identification factors and the highlanders' disregard for political borders led to the emergence of unique cultural melting pots. For a long time treated as an obstacle, from the 19th century onwards, the mountains became an attraction, even a mass attraction from the second half of the 20th century, while leisure, tourism and sport began to attract more than just elites, a change that revolutionised local social and economic relations and radically drove the government's interest in the mountains and in people residing there.

The Podhale region, especially its high mountain, "rocky" part including Zakopane, fits this model perfectly: it was a poor region, the local community stood out by virtue of its dialect, different customs and mentality including a unique value scale, a significant role of the family unit and neighbourhood as well as an original spiritual and material culture. As agriculture alone did not guarantee survival, other strategies were commonly employed such as migration, smuggling and from the late 19th century, tourism services. During the inter-war period, Zakopane became the most important resort destination in Poland, while remaining a strong cultural centre to visit, which was a must for the elites and also a large part of the middle class. In 1938, the resort town attracted nearly 60,000 visitors, four times as many as before the First World War.[9] It was also the country's most important winter sports centre, hosting the FIS championships twice (1929 and 1939).[10] No wonder that in the Second Republic of Poland (1918–1939), large infrastructure investment projects (cableways to Kasprowy Wierch and Gubałówka, ski jumping hills, transport modernisation, etc.) were financed mainly by the state, which also did not interfere with construction, the domain of private investors, both local and non-local. As a result, the town, which grew twice as big in 1922–1939 (1620 buildings were constructed) was chaotic, unplanned and full of conflicting landscape and architecture.[11] Changes were also visible in politics. At the beginning of the Second Republic of Poland, the conservative and outspokenly religious

8 See DEBARBIEUX, Bernard – RUDAZ, Gilles. *The Mountain. A Political History from the Enlightenment to the Present.* Chicago; London : University of Chicago Press, 2015; JENTSCH, Christoph. Für eine vergleichende Kulturgeographie der Hochgebirge. In *Mannheimer Geographische Arbeiten*, 1977, No. 1, pp. 57–71 (Beiträge zur geographischen Methode und Landeskunde. Festgabe für Gudrun Höhl); FUNNEL, Don – PARISH, Romola. *Mountain Environments and Communities.* London; New York : Routledge, 2001; BILLINGS, Dwight B. – KINGSOLVER, Ann E. (eds.) *Appalachia in Regional Context: Place Matters.* Lexington : Kentucky University Press, 2018.

9 See DUTKOWA, Renata. *Zakopane. Czterysta lat dziejów* 1, 2. Kraków : Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1991.

10 SZATKOWSKI, Wojciech. Z dziejów narciarstwa w Tatrach polskich (1894–2004). In ROSZKOWSKI, Jerzy N. – KOWALSKI, Robert (eds.) *Góry i góralszczyzna w dziejach i kulturze pogranicza polsko-słowackiego (Podhale, Spisz, Orawa, Gorce, Pieniny). Historia.* Nowy Targ : Podhalańska Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa, 2005, pp. 135–142; BARANIAK, Maciej. Mistrzostwa Świata Międzynarodowej Federacji w Zakopanem w 1929 r. i 1939 r. In *Prace Naukowe Akademii im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie Seria: Kultura Fizyczna*, 2010, No. 9, pp. 87–100.

11 Archiwum Akt Nowych (Archives of Modern Records – AAN), Collection Instytut Turystyki (Institute of tourism – IT), signature (sign.) 1069, Anna Kołodziejczyk, *Wpływ turystyki na ewolucję socjo-kulturową regionu Zakopanego od roku 1900 do czasów najnowszych (1977)*, 1978, p. 13; LOHMANN, Jerzy. Zakopane znaczy marzenia. In *Kierunki*, 4 December 1960; KOCHANOWSKI, Jerzy. A 'Free City'? The Zakopane of Władysław Gomułka, 1956–1970. In KOCHANOWSKI, Jerzy – KRAFT, Claudia (eds.) *Rooms for Manoeuvre. Another Look at Negotiating Processes in the Socialist Bloc*. Wien/Göttingen : V&R Unipress, 2021, p. 121.

residents of the Podhale region voted mainly for the Christian democratic right in the 1930s—primarily Piłsudski's ruling party.[12]

A consensus emerged regarding the relations between the authorities and society during and shortly after the Second World War. In war time, some residents of the Podhale region accepted the Nazi occupiers' offer to create a "highlander nation" (Goralenfolk), considering it a survival strategy, not collaboration.[13] At the same time, Podhale became an important centre of armed resistance, which continued even after the war against the county's communist authorities.

The communists—characteristically—were quite understanding when it came to the particulars of the Podhale region. As was noted in 1961, "the communist authorities—like the Nazis before them—have granted, perhaps tacitly, a privileged status to the highlanders. This probably stems from the difficulties that would arise if socialism were to be introduced in the region. [...] But the reasons do not really matter to the highlanders, the main thing was that there are no kolkhozes, they are not forced to join the party and the taxman imposes relatively low taxes—given their earnings—on them."[14] The reason was twofold: the problem of introducing communist principles into "autonomous" highlander communities – also seen in other countries of the Soviet bloc including the USSR, and purely practical considerations. This includes the fact that without the local community, the authorities would not have been able to satisfy citizens' growing consumer needs, including a—not necessarily formal share—in the profits generated. Also important was the legitimacy and prestige of the Podhale region, especially Zakopane, which became as important to the communist elites as it had been for their pre-war predecessors from the *sanacja* regime.[15] They spent their holidays there in luxury conditions and welcomed official foreign guests. Symbolic concessions to the local population were not surprising either, including consent given to the existence of highlanders' associations after 1956, or reinstatement of the traditional uniform of military mountain units.

On the other hand, though people from the Podhale region were not particularly fond of the post-war government, especially its financial branch, until the late 1970s and early 1980s, they were quite far from getting involved in political forms of resistance on a mass scale. Reports by the Security Service did not record any special issues during parliament or national council elections. During the crises of 1968 and 1970, the highlanders were quite stoic, unlike the intelligentsia of non-local origin, and their only concern in De-

12 Muzeum Tatrzańskie Zakopane (Tatra Museum Zakopane – MTZ), AR/188, *Elections to the Sejm and Senate in November 1922*, pp. 29–30; PANZ, Karolina. Powiat nowotarski. In ENGELKING, Barbara – GRABOWSKI, Jan (eds.) *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski.* 2. Warsaw : Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, 2018, p. 222; BUSZKO, Józef – PILCH Andrzej. Narodziny miasta. Zakopane w latach 1918–1939. In DUTKOWA, Renata (ed.) *Zakopane. Czterysta lat dziejów.* 1. Kraków : Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1991, pp. 247–248, 264–265, 276–277.

13 SZATKOWSKI, Wojciech. *Goralenvolk. Historia zdrady.* Zakopane : Firma Ksiegarsko-Wydawnicza Kanon, 2012; TREBUNIA-STASZEL, Stanisława. *"Lud zdolny do życia". Górale podhalańscy w oczach niemieckiego okupanta.* Warsaw : Liber Pro Arte, 2019; SZURMIAK, Katarzyna. Goralenvolk: An "Aryan" Minority in Southern Poland and Its Treatment by the Nazis. In WEISS-WENDT, Anton (ed.) *Eradicating differences, The Treatment of minorities in Nazi-dominated Europe.* Newcastle upon Tyne : Cambridge Scholars Publ., 2010, pp. 85–102; KOCHANOWSKI 2021, p. 121.

14 Herder-Institut Marburg (HIM), P-6221, 2823/61, *"Gorale" (the highlanders) – the privileged class in Poland*, 3 September 1961.

15 Sanacja (sanitation) is a term applied to the political movement led by Józef Piłsudski and the regime that was set up after the armed coup in May 1926. The term derives from the regime's declared intention to carry out a moral "sanitation" of the Polish nation.

cember 1970 was whether the new government would hinder their economic migration to North America.[16]

Unfortunately, research into the political attitudes of people living in the Podhale region began only in the 1990s, but presumably it largely reflected earlier views as well. An analysis of the highlanders' attitude towards the notion of freedom carried out at the time revealed that they linked the term primarily with economic freedom and not political freedoms, something of no special interest to them.[17] It seems that various economic relations—partly parasitic, partly symbiotic—determined the form of contact between the local community and the state with institutions in Zakopane and the Podhale region. There is no doubt that in Zakopane, room for negotiation was available on both sides, society and the state, a condition substantially different from that of the rest of the country. Each party was constantly testing how far concessions could go, eventually recognising—at least for some time—that they had a common goal and that a consensus paid off.

Feedback – The Mountains and the Party

The diverse social picture of Zakopane was first highlighted in the late 19th century. This continued in the Polish People's Republic. "At the tables sit people of from all walks of life," is how a well-known Zakopane establishment was described in 1960, "freebooters, swindlers, smugglers and traders, and among them, surprisingly, local communist dignitaries! Here a prosecutor fraternizes over a glass of vodka with a smuggler, a policeman with a foreign currency dealer, a petty swindler with a town councillor, a party secretary with a trader selling shoes smuggled from Czechoslovakia. They have fun and do business."[18] Twenty years later, the town was still seen as a place where a "black-market money changer has a government minister for a neighbour, a smuggler—a highland farmer from a family going back several centuries, a backpacker—a bishop."[19] This "ecumenism" was the fruit of the unique history of Zakopane, which from the very beginning had attracted—like a port town—people from various regions, social groups and walks of life. After the Second World War, the material and cultural attractiveness of the town helped to "domesticate" the local party as well as government structures, national and local.

After the war, the government brought oppression to the Podhale region but also a radical improvement in the standard of living for ordinary people. There was a significant improvement of the infrastructure (electrification, water supply, roads) and better access to education, healthcare, social welfare. In particular, it became easier to get a permanent job, in factories or holiday centres for example, with a fixed salary and working hours. This was becoming important for more and more of the population; in 1950, 76.5% of workers were employed in agriculture, twenty years later that number fell to just 53.8%. A dramatic increase in employment came in industry and crafts, construction, transport and communication, services, education and healthcare.[20] State-owned enterprises were another area

16 Instytut Pamięci Narodowej Kraków Kraków (IPN Kr), 030/32, Jan Roszkowicz, *Informacja o sytuacji politycznej powstałej na terenie Zakopanego po VII Plenum KC PZPR*, 7 January 1971, p. 285.
17 KRZEŚNIAK, Agnieszka. Góralskie pojmowanie wolności. In MALEWSKA-SZAŁYGIN, Anna. *Rozmowy z góralami o polityce.* Warsaw : TRIO, 2005, p. 143.
18 HIM, P-051, 1662/60, *Shady characters and free spending party men set pattern of Zakopane night life*, 3 May 1960.
19 CIEMIŃSKI, Ryszard. Portret w kolorze żółtym. In *Prawo i Życie*, 24 May 1981.
20 AAN, IT, sign. 1069, Anna Kołodziejczyk, *Wpływ turystyki na ewolucję socjo-kulturową ludności góralskiej regionu Zakopanego od roku 1900 do czasów najnowszych (1977)*, pp. 60–61, 121; CZARKOWSKA, Wanda – LESZCZYCKA, Wanda. Przemiany gospodarcze w regionie Podhala. In *Wierchy*, 1961, Vol. 30, pp. 30–46;

where the highlanders were connected to the "government" and politics, especially the Polish United Workers' Party, which was—also for non-members—the highest authority people went to with problems in their private lives or work. Paradoxically, this role of a "court of appeal" and mediator played by the basic party cells was "the biggest asset of a state-owned enterprise."[21]

We still know very little about the effect of the communist party on peripheries and can only presume that economics triumphed over ideology and informal relations over "democratic centralism" more easily and more often than in big cities. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the authorities in Zakopane achieved a level of perfection in both. This was largely thanks to the characteristics of the Zakopane party structure and the conditions in which they operated. Traditionally, there was no left-wing base in the Podhale region and as a result, the Party organisation in Zakopane was not so much a party of workers and farmers, but of intellectuals and directors. Their percentage of workers was consistently much lower than recommended, never exceeding 25%, while that of the intelligentsia was always much higher, sometimes over 70%. Party membership in general was low, around 6–7% of adult residents of Zakopane, and many basic party cells were in fact Potemkin villages, existing only on paper.

A substantial part of the cadre was created out of necessity from functionaries sent to Zakopane from elsewhere, people who were inexperienced and chosen randomly and above all, did not understand the specifics of the region and the complexity of the local circumstances. Often, they also sought financial success over political careers, a feat not difficult to achieve in Zakopane. This led to constant turnover, though those who left their positions within party structures would often remain in Zakopane, maintaining roles but in more profitable positions, for instance as managers of holiday resorts, shops or restaurants, which were important elements of the informal local networks. "Many of them have managed to settle in Zakopane," a Kraków daily wrote about party immigrants in 1961, "hence their tendency to become friends with the highlanders, to turn a blind eye to their vices. Instead of becoming educators [...] the newcomers remain passive at best."[22] They usually remained passive, but not for free. The particulars of Zakopane, a town of "horrible townsfolk converting people into money",[23] provided a chance—in exchange for skilful "understanding"—for material advancement likely not achievable elsewhere in Poland on such a scale. A report compiled in mid-1972 by a party commission from Warsaw pointed to the phenomenon "of people coming to Zakopane from elsewhere to take up various posts becoming quickly rich: 'a man comes with a small suitcase,' they said, 'two years later he has a car, three more years and he has a villa.'"[24] On the other hand, it is not surprising that the party increasingly came to be seen as a convenient tool for accelerating one's financial career.[25]

CZARKOWSKA, Wanda – LESZCZYCKA, Wanda. Region Podhala w 25-lecie PRL. In *Wierchy*, 1971, Vol. 39, pp. 163–176.

21 MALEWSKA-SZAŁYGIN, Anna. Podhale – raj natury czy kombinat. In *Opcja na prawo*, http://www.opcjanaprawo.pl/index.php/grupa-rzeszowska-sp-1218852595/komunikat-sp-2032361976/item/3436-podhale-raj-natury-czy-kombinat [last viewed: 8 October 2021].

22 DUDZIK, Zdzisław. Zakopiański pępek. In *Dziennik Polski* (Kraków), 22–23 October 1961.

23 ADAMIECKI, Wojciech. *Taniec z nożami*. Warsaw : Państwowe Wydawnictwo "ISKRY", 1975, pp. 207–208.

24 KOCHANOWSKI 2007, p. 80.

25 KOCHANOWSKI 2007, p. 94.

Indeed, maintaining a hard ideological line in Zakopane was not easy. As early as 1957, there emerged a belief that "the tendency in the party is to succumb to petty bourgeois and the liberal moods of non-party circles rather than the party influencing these circles."[26] In the following decade, a wave of guests brought not only money to Zakopane, but also new models which many party members could not resist. "Those who come here on holiday," came an observation in 1966, "are mainly dignitaries and their families from various Polish towns and cities, a significant percentage of them from Warsaw. [...] While they do not go to church back home where they may be regarded as atheists, here on holiday they do, often even by car. The local party members watch this passively as do the local residents. This [...] has a demoralising effect."[27]

The above statement inadvertently points to an important factor influencing the behaviour of the Zakopane establishment, namely close links to Warsaw. Thanks to a visit by members of the top leadership, Zakopane came to be regarded as a "town to which ordinary regulations do not apply, and neither do ordinary procedures or ordinary chain of command. [...] The local authorities in Zakopane often come to the conclusion that our state dignitaries work in Warsaw basically only to deal with Zakopane's problems."[28] This was a highly symbiotic set-up: Zakopane residents, referred to as "invalids" because "they have their backs in Warsaw",[29] took great care of their guests from the capital, who in turn guaranteed help in difficult matters or conflicts, or a safety net when the locals stumbled. And such opportunities were highly likely, given the frequent turning of a blind eye.

"You don't bother me, I won't bother you" – Eyes Wide Shut

In the last few years of Gomułka's rule, the party structures in Zakopane became fossilised and the "human resources policy" consisted largely of appointing people to managerial positions depending on their proximity to those in power, and placing trusted men in key, profitable positions. According to a 1972 assessment, "the executive of the Municipal Committee [...] was […] more of an observer than an actor. Power was exercised through direct contacts between the first secretary of the Municipal Committee, and directors of enterprises, managers of various institutions. Hence their special role in the life of Z[akopane]. Some party members view this directorial group, holding tightly on to their posts, as the real governing body in Z[akopane]."[30] The wide clientelist networks caught not only party functionaries, but also policemen, sports activists and people employed in the justice system, inland revenue and customs, etc. Some informal groups were established for a limited period for the purpose of a specific venture, others lasted longer. There were also those based on immediate and extended family, which—given the unique "family code" in the Podhale region—guaranteed both effectiveness and security.

26 AN Kr, Komitet Miejski Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej (KM PZPR) Zakopane, 29/2272/34, *Działalność zakopiańskiej organizacji partyjnej za okres od 1 grudnia* [1956] *do 26 marca p19*[57], 26 March 1957.

27 AN Kr, Komitet Wojewódzki (KW) PZPR, 277, *Posiedzenie Egzekutywy KW PZPR w Krakowie*, 7 October 1966, p. 111.

28 DUDZIK 1961, Zakopiański. The same journalist had written one week earlier: "the local authorities think very highly of themselves. For them, the supervising institution in Kraków is no great authority, for in Zakopane they too often meet ministers, deputy prime ministers [...] Delusions about one's own contacts with the highest authorities in the country seriously undermine the official equilibrium. Instead of diligently doing their job, some 'statesmen' from Zakopane help with big politics. I'm really afraid that big politics will not benefit at all from this, but Zakopane will suffer greatly..." DUDZIK, Zdzisław. Po prostu Zakopane. In *Dziennik Polski* (Kraków), 15–16 October 1961.

29 Z kogo i dla kogo żyje Zakopane. In *Dziennik Polski* (London), 22 July 1959.

30 KOCHANOWSKI 2007, p. 94.

For a characteristic example, imagine a policeman born and working in Zakopane. His highlander roots obligate him to treat the locals appropriately. "He is very approachable and very popular. [...] You can complete all the formalities connected with a trip to Czechoslovakia 'privately' with him, but he does it for free, wanting to win the sympathy of the town residents. He is probably a party member, but one guided by common sense and above all, he is Pole."[31] On the other hand, he tries to satisfy his policing duties as loyally as possible but complains that "the fight against economic crime is very hard and difficult. There are cases when a thief is found, but there is no victim. No institution is willing to admit it has suffered losses."[32]

There is no doubt that the networks developed in Zakopane also entangled judges or prosecutors, which is suggested by the extremely low percentage of cases going to court.[33] Yet the most evidence in the sources has been left by police officers, or the People's Militia. They made up a considerable group of over 100 individuals in the early 1970s, one with the closest links to the local community. Lower salaries prompted them to turn a blind eye to, for example, illegal construction, production or trade. There were also cases of policemen collaborating with criminal gangs involved in smuggling as well as trading in foreign currencies and gold. As income from the tourism boom in the second half of the 1960s grew, investigation of serious crime decreased with the local police focusing on only minor cases.[34] In addition, officers coming to Zakopane from outside quickly established relationships with highlander families, which was not without influence on their work. For example, a sergeant married into a family which owned a private workshop with an annual turnover of one million zlotys, an astronomical amount in the 1960s.[35] There is plenty of information about relationships between policemen and barmaids, buffet attendants and waitresses working in second-rate establishments "because of decent salaries and the possibility of getting a drink..."[36]

"Zakopane Consortium" – Jumping Over Barriers Together

Nevertheless, these were matters of minor importance to the (in)formal coexistence of the authorities and society in Zakopane and the Podhale region. The main arena of collaboration was tourism, which was developing rapidly from the late 1950s. While Zakopane welcomed 960,000 visitors (including 23,000 foreigners) in 1959, a decade later that number rose to nearly 2,800,000 (including 245,000 foreigners).[37] In addition, visitors wanted to spend their time in Zakopane in better, more intimate conditions. However, the last large investment in tourist accommodation had been the Dom Turysty (Tourist House), opened in 1958, in which most beds were in dormitories. The following decade saw no new hotel for "non-organised", moderately well-off tourists constructed. The situation was alleviated, to some extent, by holiday houses owned by enterprises, artists' associations etc., but

31 HIM, P-051, 1391/59, *Peoples Militia in Zakopane*, 18 April 1959.
32 AN Kr, KM PZPR Zakopane, 29/2272/74, *Posiedzenie Egzekutywy KM PZPR w Zakopanem*, 24 June 1959.
33 AN Kr, KM PZPR Zakopane, 29/2272/95, *Informacja o stanie realizacji uchwały Egzekutywy KW PZPR w lipcu 1965 r. w sprawie dalszego wzmożenia ochrony mienia społecznego w Zakopanem w roku 1969*.
34 AN Kr, KM PZPR Zakopane, 29/2272/99, *Protokół posiedzenia Egzekutywy KM PZPR w Zakopanem*, 25 February 1972, *"Ocena stanu moralno-politycznego aparatu MO i SB w KM MO w Zakopanem"*.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 AAN, IT, 1069, pp. 27, 35–37.

in the mid-1960s, they were forbidden to build their own guest houses. The only solution lay in private construction but potential investors, both local and especially those coming from outside the city, came up against increasingly high barriers: protracted official procedures, lack of development plans, limitations associated with nature conservation etc. Overcoming these obstacles required the establishment of an informal consortium within which several social and institutional actors operated in a non-formalised symbiosis: 1) local residents with assets (land, money, social capital) needed for investment projects, 2) enterprises (sometimes from the central level) buying or renting guest houses built by the first group, 3) state or cooperative travel agencies acting as intermediaries between groups 1 and 2, 4) municipal authorities relieved of the duty to take care of "open" tourist accommodations and to argue with e.g. enterprises over the construction of their own houses by private contractors, 5) groups mentioned in the previous subchapter—from the government in Warsaw to local policemen gaining various material and non-material benefits from Zakopane's social networks.

Obviously, this symbiotic set-up was centred around the local highlander families, which had at their disposal the most important assets—they owned half of the land in Zakopane as well as social and material capital. They also had close and pragmatic relations with the local authorities, whose ineptitude and negligence was a source of substantial profits. Characteristically, immediately after 1956 when Wiktor Pękała, president of the Presidium of the Municipal National Council who was elected following the wave of the "October" revolution, was making plans to "Europeanise" Zakopane and invest in its accommodation infrastructure, many locals supported Kazimierz Moździerz, the local party secretary who preferred workers' holidays. The reason was not the locals' respect for the Polish United Workers' Party, but a hope that an egalitarian vision of Zakopane would provide them with income for years to come, and also, a lack of inexpensive hotels or hostels would enable them to charge exorbitant prices for what was often poor-quality accommodation.[38]

Investments in tourist services like guest houses or canteens brought financial returns on a scale not to be found elsewhere; the construction would pay for itself after only two to four years. This led to the emergence of "developers"; organised and usually family groups of intermediaries who "often working in collaboration with officials and by putting pressure on land-owning highlanders, buy land from them and resell it a great profit. They also act as intermediaries in the organisation of construction works."[39] Of particular interest to us are their links to town officials, without whom the whole venture would have been much more difficult or sometimes even impossible. Obviously, the most important roles were played by officials, who decided on the purpose of various plots and the town's possible pre-emptive rights to them, who also granted loans and construction materials, approved architectural designs and then supervised their implementation, many times failing to notice, for example, that the permissible floor area was considerably exceeded.[40] They failed to notice much more serious offences as well. As we read in a 1972 report, "there are cases when the supervising inspector, responsible for observance of the law, is also the designer of an illegally constructed building. The impudence of private capital can be illustrated [...]

38 IPN Kr, 030/1/7, *Sprawozdanie z pracy operacyjnej Referatu ds. Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego KM MO w Zakopanem za IV kwartał 1958*, 2 January 1959; SKULSKA, Wilhelmina. Dlaczego Zakopane? In *Świat*, 18 August 1958.
39 KOCHANOWSKI 2007, p. 82.
40 KĄKOL, Kazimierz. W obronie prawa. Co się dzieje w Zakopanem? In *Prawo i Życie*, 7 January 1973.

by a house owned by A. Dziewicki, former manager of ZAiKS [Association of Stage Authors and Composers] houses. [...] The house was built across a road, in the line of a bridge, and as a result, the authorities were forced to build a new bridge and change the direction of the street. The owner of the house was not punished. Significantly, both the house, and the new bridge and road were designed by the same municipal architect of Z[akopane]."[41]

The involvement of municipal officials in the cutting of various construction-related Gordian knots was not necessarily merely associated with corruption and material gains, especially within the local networks. It may have been based on mutual "services" or caused by an understandable desire to rationalise one's work, or to resolve local conflicts.[42] On the other hand, various decision makers—top party and state leadership, heads of central institutions or directors of large enterprises—were similarly able to satisfy the aspirations of their subordinates' ambitions, from workers to senior officials, associated with "prestigious" holidays in Zakopane. This helped maintain peace in society, stabilising the system to a considerable degree for a reasonable price: the authorities gave up, usually consciously, only a small part of their prerogatives.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, private individuals offered accommodation for around 16,000 tourists (including over 10,000 unregistered beds), twice as many as the entire state-controlled sector, both open (hotels and hostels) and closed (holiday houses belonging to enterprises).[43] However, the biggest profits were guaranteed not so much through individual tourists, but by selling or leasing guest houses to enterprises. There is no doubt that they transferred—directly or via travel agencies—a vast majority of the funds to the pockets of private owners of guest houses or canteens. This is not surprising, as the ambition of many enterprises and institutions was—for the reasons outlined above—to have their own holiday house in some prestigious resort, ideally in Zakopane. New investment projects were banned in 1966, yet it was still possible to buy or lease a guest house. As some entities, especially large industrial conglomerates, had practically unlimited financial resources, attractive property was even auctioned and the owners received much more for it than they initially asked. Paying half the value of a guest house for an annual lease was not a rare occurrence either.[44]

No wonder that at the turn of the 1970s, the annual (legal and illegal) income of private entrepreneurs from Zakopane from room rentals, catering, transport, manufacturing, trade, illegal sale of alcohol etc. was estimated at over billion zlotys, more or less the same as the

41 KOCHANOWSKI 2007, p. 93.

42 IPN Kr, 030/32, Jan Roszkowicz, *Notatka z rozmowy z adwokatem Władysławem Gajewskim*, 26 January 1971, p. 352; TENETA, Adam. Zakopane za łapówki. In *Dziennik Polski* (Kraków), 18–19 June 1972; Handlowali zakopiańskimi willami. In *Dziennik Polski* (Kraków), 18 December 1971. On the actions of officials, see LINDENBERGER, Thomas – LÜDTKE, Alf. Eigen-sinn: praktyki społeczne i sprawowane władzy. Wprowadzenie. In LINDENBERGER, Thomas – LÜDTKE, Alf (selection and introduction) – KOŃCZAL, Kornelia (ed.) *Eigen-Sinn. Życie codzienne, podmiotowość i sprawowanie władzy w XX wieku*. Poznań : Wydawnictwo Nauka i Innowacje, 2018, pp. 20–25.

43 Zakopiański tramwaj na niekontrolowanych torach. In *Słowo Powszechne*, 25 May 1967; AN Kr, KM PZPR Zakopane, 29/2272/101, *Posiedzenie Egzekutywy KM PZPR w Zakopanem* [Minutes of a meeting of the executive of the Municipal Committee],15 September 1972.

44 KOCHANOWSKI 2007, p. 86. We can only estimate that in the late 1960s and early 1970s, approximately 200 companies rented around 350 guest houses with 10,000 beds in Zakopane and its environs. AN Kr, KM PZPR Zakopane, 29/2272/101, *Posiedzenie Egzekutywy KM PZPR w Zakopanem*, 15 September 1972; KOCHANOWSKI 2007, pp. 80-81; KUŚMIEREK, Józef. Nie stać nas na takie Zakopane. In *Życie Warszawy*, 17 September 1972; Wille w Zakopanem. In *Ekspress Wieczorny*, 7 July 1971; MATZENAUER, Marian. Zakopiańska wiosna. In *Trybuna Ludu*, 1 June 1972.

investment of the entire state-controlled sector in the town throughout the 1960s.[45] This was a huge sum, prompting the private sector to control and corrupt officials, who did not put up much resistance. Predictably, both sides sought to maintain the status quo as long as possible.

Inevitably, every organisation is at risk of collapsing due to internal forces and external restrictions, and the "Zakopane consortium" was no exception as there were plenty of people willing to break or even blow up the petrified structures in Zakopane. Their reasons were similar to those which drove the anti-Semitic campaign of 1967–1968, largely generated by 30 and 40-year-olds who were pushing—effectively—the older generation out of their positions. These "youngsters", craving social, political and material advancement, were quite numerous in Zakopane, especially in sport or tourist circles. They had been waiting for the opportunity to take over posts held for ten years or longer by Zakopane apparatchiks entangled in the networks described above and strongly supported by the Gomułka elites. The fall of Władysław Gomułka in December 1970 caused a veritable earthquake in Zakopane. Security Services and prosecutors, unsure of what the new regime would bring and concerned about their own safety, ceased to protect existing set-ups, especially given that their Warsaw patrons had largely disappeared with Gomułka. The results of an investigation into the corruption of town officials revealing the scale of the "pathology"—which had been an open secret, in fact—contributed to a take-over by the youngsters of the highest party positions and municipal posts in the autumn of 1971 (Lech Bafia, b. 1932 and Stefan Gustek, b. 1934).

It did not take long for the effects to appear: half of the employees of municipal institutions were replaced; there was a purge in the Zakopane party structures and the police force; senior officials responsible for municipal services, construction and taxes were arrested and convicted, as were a dozen or so intermediaries and individuals for bribary. A campaign was launched to eradicate all local ills and transform Zakopane into a "socialist resort".[46] An ostentatious demolition of several illegally constructed houses in November 1972 was intended to "demonstrate that no one can break the law with impunity, that it is impossible to intimidate and bribe the authorities."[47] Houses constructed with official permission were checked with regard to the observance of the permissible floor area norms and an attempt was made to introduce rent control of private accommodations and to tax it.

However, this led not to a real seizure of control, but to the implementation of adaptation strategies by a majority of actors on the Zakopane scene, beginning with the highlanders and ending with the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. The reason was simple: in the mid-1970s, the number of visitors to Zakopane and the Tatra Mountains approached five million, almost twice as many as at the end of the Gomułka era. They would be accommodated not so much by the new hotels which were indeed being built, but private houses, where the number of beds increased by over 7,100 (including 6,000 unregistered ones)[48] over a period of a few years, and houses which continued to be built by various institutions (e.g. the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party

45 KOCHANOWSKI 2007, pp. 84–85.
46 BRACKI, Maciej. Zbuduj dom w Zakopanem! In *Fakty*, 23 March 1975.
47 SMOCZYŃSKI, Juliusz. Zakopane w 5 lat później. In *Kurier Polski*, 7–9 May 1977.
48 AAN, IT, sign. 1069, A. Kołodziejczyk, *Wpływ turystyki na ewolucję socjo-kulturową ludności góralskiej regionu Zakopanego od 1900 r. do czasów najnowszych (1977)*, p. 73.

and the Ministry of Internal Affairs) despite the ban.[49] It was not possible to control all private houses, whose owners—including the risk in their pricing—rented rooms on their own and outside the tax system.[50] No wonder that in 1978, the head of the local authority in Zakopane explained that "often administrative restrictions only give people more work, irritate interested parties and deepen corruption. They are ineffective and above all, they do not develop civic culture."[51]

There is no doubt either that both town officials and party functionaries—representing Gierek's regime now—became as assimilated and entangled in the local networks as their predecessors. It is, therefore, not surprising that in the late 1970s, "illegal tourism" became as obvious as it had been a decade earlier. The rest was done by the economic crisis and the Solidarity revolution of 1980–1981. Consequently, as was noted in 1984, the gap between the "state" and the "private" sector became even more pronounced than had been suggested by a party analysis from twelve years earlier.[52] In 1986, the head of the Polish United Workers' Party in Zakopane even admitted that "the expansion of private enterprise is in direct proportion to the demise of [...] state-owned companies. [...] It looks as if the state was consciously—I don't want to say deliberately—ceding the organisation of tourism and leisure to private entities. This concerns not only accommodation facilities, but also catering, trade, services etc."[53]

Still, the post-1989 political and economic transformation demonstrated that most phenomena described above occurred independent of time, system and party, a fact determined by a combination of various factors: geographical (the Tatra Mountains are still the only patch of Alpine landscape in Poland), historical and cultural (the myth of Zakopane is very much alive), social (society's increased wealth and radical expansion of the middle class) or economic (leisure time services are still the basic source of income for the local population and tax avoidance is still more profitable than the payment of taxes). The highlanders still relish their distinctiveness, or even uniqueness, while local officials, now part of true local self-government, are at even greater pains than before 1989 to avoid conflicts. As a result, the narratives around Zakopane in the first two decades of the 21st century seem as if they have been taken straight from the 1960s or 1970s. An undiminished vogue for Zakopane drives—like it did half a century ago—investment, which, given strict regulations, generates construction without planning permission on a scale next to which the excesses from the Gomuła or Gierek eras look pitiful by comparison.[54] Like in the Polish People's Republic, the number of non-registered and non-taxed beds is most likely higher than the number of legal ones, and their owners can feel as safe as they did in the 1960s.

49 MASZEK, Marek. Duże miasto pod małymi górami? Rozmowa z mgr. inż. Stanisławem Słodyczką. In *Sztandar Młodych*, 15–17 May 1981.

50 Raport z Zakopanego. In *Gazeta Krakowska*, 27 August 1975; PYKOSZ, Wojciech. Trudno rządzić pod Tatrami. In *Życie Literackie*, 21 March 1976; HIRNLE, Piotr. Tatry są jedne. In *Polityka*, 14 February 1976; MIGDAŁ, Konstanty. Baza dla milionów. In *Dziennik Polski* (Kraków), 12 August 1975; ADAMIECKI, Wojciech. Człowiek w tłoku. In *Literatura*, 7 April 1977.

51 Wiatr od gór. Rozmowa z mgr. Stanisławem Żygadło, naczelnikiem Zakopanego i Gminy Tatrzańskiej. In *Kultura*, 14 May 1978.

52 ORDYK, Tomasz. Kto rządzi w stolicy Tatr? In *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 23 December 1984.

53 DĘBEF, Krzysztof. Zakopane nie jest dla mas. Rozmowa z I sekretarzem KM PZPR w Zakopanem, Andrzejem Wargowskim. In *Sprawy i Ludzie*, 22 May 1986.

54 KOPCIK, Ewa. Samowola po góralsku. Z widokiem na Giewont. In *Dziennik Polski* (Kraków), 13 October 2012, https://dziennikpolski24.pl/samowola-po-goralsku-z-widokiem-na-giewont/ar/3188018 [last viewed: 8 October 2021]; Cf. e.g. *Tygodnik Podhalański*, 9 June 2005, 3 February 2007, 2 April 2009, 1 December 2011, 28 February 2013; HAJOK, Dawid. Samowolka po góralsku, hej! In *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 3 November 2011, http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,10579715,Samowolka_po_goralsku__hej_.html [last viewed: 8 October 2021].

"Zakopane is an informal economy Mecca," write Beata Sabała-Zielińska and Paulina Młynarska, experts on modern Zakopane. "Illegal accommodation is estimated at thousands of beds and is flourishing. [...] Mayors know about it, as do the district head and all kinds of officials. [...] We are talking about impressive guest houses and stylish villas, openly advertised in the press and on the internet! Is anybody prosecuting their owners? Is anybody checking them? Never! Unless an official receives a letter of denunciation citing justice and rule of law. [...] No harm will be done to the offender, however, if the regional authorities officially put the matter as follows: 'We will not saw off the branch on which the whole Zakopane is sitting, even if the branch should have never grown here.' The Inland Revenue is doing little as well, despite the fact that the 'offenders' are easy to find. Inspections of the several thousand illegal accommodation facilities apparently constitute such a big logistical and formal challenge that the Inland Revenue has basically given up on them."[55]

As one journalist from Zakopane summed it up, "it is a cross-party, timeless and absolutely demoralising problem."[56] Like in the period before 1989, the government is not really concerned, appreciating as it does the legitimising significance of the Podhale region and Zakopane and exploiting it to build its image. While no VIP from Warsaw, no president, prime minister or even minister will ever be seen in a folk costume from Łowicz or Kraków, they are always happy to be photographed in a highlander's hat or sheepskin jacket with the mandatory shepherd's axe. "Are the hundreds of axes, hats or sheepskin vests given to Warsaw politicians for over the years part of a business deal or a mark of respect?"[57] asked a Podhale weekly. Given that among those "quasi-highlanders" we have politicians from the left (Leszek Miller), centre (Lech Wałęsa, Donald Tusk, Bronisław Komorowski) and right (Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński, Andrzej Duda), I would choose the former.

55 SABAŁA-ZIELIŃSKA, Beata – MŁYNARSKA, Paulina. *Zakopane. Nie ma przebacz.* Bielsko-Biała : Wydawnictwo Pascal, 2014, pp. 72–73.
56 MRÓZ, Wojciech. *Zakopane. Miasto cudów.* Gdynia : Novae Res – Wydawnictwo Innowacyjne, 2015, p. 53.
57 Prawie górale. In *Tygodnik Podhalański*, 28 March 2019.

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FORUM HISTORIAE

An Unequal Alliance: Social Scientists as Experts in Socialist Czechoslovakia

Vítězslav Sommer

Abstract

SOMMER, Vítězslav. An Unequal Alliance: Social Scientists as Experts in Socialist Czechoslovakia.

This article examines the role of social scientific expertise in socialist Czechoslovakia. The first section centres on the 1950s, when the new social sciences that helped build the institutions and rules of the new regime were established. The roles of social scientists as experts are analysed during the reform era of the 1960s and the so-called consolidation regime of the 1970s. In the final part of this text, the 1980s are characterised as a period when the unequal alliance of the social sciences and the socialist state fell apart. The article demonstrates that studying the relationship of state policies towards social scientific expertise deepens our understanding of state socialist rule. Scrutinising the responses to demands imposed by the state and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) on academia and expertise provides a fresh perspective on the attitudes of the educated middle class towards socialism as a political project and an everyday reality.

Keywords: Czechoslovakia 1948–1989, Cold War, State Socialism, History of expertise

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In the summer of 1945, head of the Office of Scientific Research and Development from 1941 to 1947 and science advisor Vannevar Bush submitted a report entitled *Science: The Endless Frontier* to American President Harry S. Truman. He proposed that the state invest more funding into science research and projects, take greater responsibility for the development of education and place more emphasis on putting the results of scientific research into practice. Bush saw overcoming the boundaries of human knowledge as not only a necessary condition for solving the problems of American society, but also as a new source of discovery and entrepreneurship, something the United States of America (USA) was well-known for. He insisted to the president:

> The pioneer spirit is still vigorous within this nation. Science offers a largely unexplored hinterland for the pioneer who has the tools for his task. The rewards of such exploration both for the Nation and the individual are great. Scientific progress is one essential key to our security as a nation, to our better health, to more jobs, to a higher standard of living, and to our cultural progress.[1]

The report was a foundational document of US science policy in the post-war period.

The alliance between the state and science in the USA during the Cold War has been processed in great detail by historians, who have shown that the creation of research

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1 BUSH, Vannevar. *Science, The Endless Frontier: A Report to the President by Vannevar Bush, Director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, July 1945*. Available on the Internet: https://www.nsf.gov/od/lpa/nsf50/vbush1945.htm#transmittal

bases was meant as a means of strengthening national security, especially in light of the superpower's rivalry with the Soviet Union (USSR).[2] Generous financial resources flowed into American universities and other research institutions from the budgets of security forces in particular. The aim was not only the development of technologies useful for the defence industry, but also control systems, organisational technologies and theoretical concepts. They were to help the state with economic planning, strategic decision-making and development policies in the Global South.[3] "Cold War social science" is responsible for cybernetics, organisational science, systems theory, game theory, rational choice theory, communications theory and modernisation theory.[4] Social scientists created "social technologies", intended to govern the state, the economy and society as a whole.

Social scientific knowledge also found an application in solving domestic problems of the USA such as poverty, race segregation and the urban crisis. The creation of a welfare state, economic and urban planning, and social engineering were areas where the social sciences found significant utility.[5] This fruitful partnership of the state and academia suffered, however, in the 1960s when the post-war liberal consensus, including faith in the unlimited possibilities of policies based on scientific knowledge, fell apart. The involvement of scholars in the Vietnam War and other foreign policy activities was condemned, not only by a sceptical public, but even the academic community itself.[6] The counterculture criticised the post-war technocracy and its blind faith in Western scientific rationality. Moreover, the economic crisis of the 1970s combined with growing environmental issues dealt yet another blow to the once unquestioned partnership between the state and science.

The study of similar questions in the context of state socialism puts a difficult task before the historian. Although sizable attention has been paid to the history of science in the so-called Eastern Bloc, particularly to the history of institutions and the ideological control of research, considerable gaps still exist in the understanding of interactions between the state and social sciences under socialist dictatorships.[7] The idea of a partisanship of knowl-

2 ERICKSON, Paul – KLEIN, Judy L. – DASTON, Lorraine et al. *How Reason Almost Lost Its Mind: The Strange Career of Cold War Rationality.* Chicago : The University of Chicago Press, 2013; SOLOVEY, Mark – CRAVENS, Hamilton (eds.) *Cold War Social Science: Knowledge Production, Liberal Democracy, and Human Nature*. New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2012; SOLOVEY, Mark. *Shaky Foundations: The Politics-Patronage-Social Science Nexus in Cold War America*. New Brunswick, N.J.; London : Rutgers University Press, 2013; SOLOVEY, Mark. *Social Science for What? Battles over Public Funding for the "Other Sciences" at the National Science Foundation.* Cambridge, MA : MIT Press 2020.

3 DAYÉ, Christian. *Experts, Social Scientists, and Techniques of Prognosis in Cold War America*. Cham : Palgrave Macmillan, 2020; LORENZINI, Sara. *Global Development: A Cold War History*. Princeton : Princeton University Press, 2019; ANDERSSON Jenny. *The Future of the World: Futurology, Futurists, and the Struggle for the Post Cold War Imagination*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2018.

4 AMADAE, Sonja M. *Rationalizing Capitalist Democracy: The Cold War Origins of Rational Choice Liberalism*. Chicago : The University of Chicago Press, 2003; AMADAE, Sonja M. *Prisoners of Reason: Game Theory and Neoliberal Political Economy*. New York : Cambridge University Press, 2016; GILMAN, Nils. *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America*. Baltimore : Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003; MIROWSKI, Philip. *Machine Dreams: Economics Becomes a Cyborg Science*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2002.

5 HEYCK, Hunter. *Age of System: Understanding the Development of Modern Social Science*. Baltimore : Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015; LIGHT Jennifer S. *From Warfare to Welfare: Defense Intellectuals and Urban Problems in Cold War America*. Baltimore : Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.

6 Regarding the problematic relations between Cold War states and academia, see SOLOVEY, Mark. Project Camelot and the 1960s Epistemological Revolution: Rethinking the Politics-patronage-social Science Nexus. In *Social Studies of Science*, 2001, Vol. 31, No. 2, p. 171–206; KAPLAN, Fred. *The Wizards of Armageddon*. Stanford : Stanford University Press, 1991; ROBIN, Ron. *The Making of the Cold War Enemy: Culture and Politics in the Military-Intellectual Complex*. Princeton : Princeton University Press, 2003. For criticism of the involvement of experts, intellectuals and academic institutions in American foreign policy, see CHOMSKY, Noam – KATZNELSON, Ira – LEWONTIN, R. C. et al. *The Cold War & The University: Toward an Intellectual History of the Post-war Era*. New York : The New Press, 1997.

7 CALDWELL, Peter C. *Dictatorship, State Planning, and Social Theory in the German Democratic Republic*. New

edge production was the foundation of the Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge, which influenced the social sciences and humanities for a significant period of time. Socialist countries built research infrastructure, but at the same time enforced political control of scholarship and the state investment came with obstructions, particularly through repeated political interference into the academic community. Furthermore, experts' activities were influenced by the simultaneous existence of state and party apparatuses. With reference to the definition used by Gil Eyal, who understands "expertise" as the transfer of scientific knowledge from the academic sphere into politics, experts during the time of state socialism found themselves in an extremely complicated situation, from an ideological perspective and also from an institutional point of view.[8] Aside from academic or expert institutions and state authorities (e.g. ministries, the planning organisation, state-owned enterprises), the pervasive party apparatus also influenced research and expertise substantially. This involved the complicated interconnection of institutions and power hierarchies with formal and informal rules.

This article examines the role of social science experts in Czechoslovakia in the building and governing of the bourgeoning socialist state.[9] The first part focuses on the 1950s, when the new social sciences that helped built institutions and establish the rules of the new regime were founded. In the second part of the article, the roles of the social sciences in the reform era of the 1960s are examined. This period is characterised not only as an era of critical reflection on Stalinism, but also one of experimentation and innovation.

Next is a look at the relationship between the socialist state and the social sciences in the 1970s, when state policies, ostensibly based on scientific knowledge and expertise, maintained existing institutions and power relations through centralised party control. The social sciences were intended to reinforce the technocratic character of the so-called consolidation regime.

In the final part, the 1980s are defined as the period when the unequal alliance of the social sciences and the socialist state dissolved. While political elites mobilised the social sciences to rescue socialism, general scepticism and an effort to emancipate themselves from the hands of a centralised and bureaucratic state predominated on the side of scholars and experts. Ultimately, it was the social scientists who contributed most to the search for developmental alternatives that went beyond the boundaries of socialism.

This article endeavours to show that understanding the relationship of state policy towards the social sciences provides more general knowledge about the history of socialist rule.

York : Cambridge University Press, 2003; GEROVITCH, Slava. *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak: History of Soviet Cybernetics*. Cambridge, MA : The MIT Press, 2002; BOCKMAN, Johanna K. *Markets in the Name of Socialism: Left-Wing Origins of Neoliberalism*. Stanford : Stanford University Press, 2011; RINDZEVIČIŪTĖ, Eglė. *The Power of Systems: How Policy Sciences Opened Up the Cold War World*. Ithaca, NY : Cornell University Press, 2016.

8 EYAL, Gil. *The Crisis of Expertise*. Cambridge : Polity Press, 2019, pp. 7–8. Eyal characterises expertise as the interface between academia, politics and legislation, where expert activities take place. Although expertise uses the arguments and methods of scientific research and many experts actually operate within academia, it moves in a faster timeline. Expertise respects the different pace of academic research and politics, mediates their mutual communication and must be relevant in both spheres.

9 This article summarises the outcomes of my research on expertise in the era of Czechoslovak state socialism. This research is presented most comprehensively, supplemented by Matěj Spurný and Jaromír Mrňka, in SOMMER, Vítězslav a kol. *Řídit socialismus jako firmu: technokratické vládnutí v* Československu*, 1956–1989*. Praha : Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR; NLN, 2019. This article builds mainly on my first attempt at formulating the developmental tendencies of expert governance in socialist Czechoslovakia in the article SOMMER, Vítězslav. Towards the Expert Governance: Social Scientific Expertise and the Socialist State in Czechoslovakia 1950s–1980s. In *Serendipities: Journal for the Sociology and History of the Social Sciences*, 2016, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 138–157.

Additionally, scrutinising responses to the demands imposed by the state and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) on academia and expertise provides new insight into the attitudes of the educated middle class towards socialism as a political project and an everyday reality.

Rules, Apparatuses and Institutions (1950s)

The Communist Party's seizure of power in February 1948 changed the institutional foundation and political function of the social sciences and humanities in Czechoslovakia. High Stalinism, which lasted from 1949 to 1953, called for the establishment of new social sciences and a strengthening of their partisanship. Political elites and academic functionaries sought to turn the social sciences into an "active superstructure" that would contribute to building socialism.[10] Stalin's work *The Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR* (1951) characterised the study of society as a discovery of the laws of social and economic development. The task of the social sciences here was to help the Communist Party through the discovery and description of these laws.[11] If positivist "bourgeois science" professed the ideal of objectivity, the truth of socialist scholarship rested in the scholars' affiliation with the revolutionary party, which was carrying out an objective, and hence, the true laws of history. Therefore, the social sciences were forced to submit to the demands of party politics.

Mobilisation of the social sciences for the needs of the state, a common phenomenon of the Cold War, was manifested within Czechoslovakia through a significant ideological and institutional reconstruction. The existing conceptual frameworks of individual disciplines were shattered in the name of Marxism-Leninism, and so it is possible to speak of an effort to "Sovietise" the social sciences by applying Soviet Marxism-Leninism as a universal theory.[12] The ambition to create socialist social sciences and humanities was also reflected in the reconstruction of an institutional base. One immediate consequence of the communists coming to power was a purge of personnel, which despite the preservation of a certain continuity with the previous period, in some fields in particular it created not only new academic elites, but also a new academic and expert milieu. Institutional reconstruction, including an effort to apply Soviet models of research organisation in Czechoslovakia, followed such repressive interventions.[13] The buttress of basic research was to be the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (ČSAV) and the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAV), which was founded in 1953.[14]

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10 On the relationship between partisanship and knowledge production, see SOMMER, Vítězslav. *Angažované dějepisectví: Stranická historiografie mezi stalinismem a reformním komunismem (1950–1970)*. Praha : Nakladatelství Lidové noviny; Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy, 2011, pp. 99–112.

11 STALIN, Josif Vissarionovich. *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*. Peking : Foreign Language Press, 1972.

12 For a case study of Czech historiography, see JIROUŠEK, Bohumil. Časopis „Sovětská věda – Historie" jako „vzor" historikovy práce a nástroj ideologizace vědy. In *Soudobé dějiny,* 2013, Vol. 20, No. 3, pp. 379–398.

13 Forms of "Sovietisation" of universities in the region, see CONNELLY, John. *Captive University: The Sovietization of East German, Czech, and Polish Higher Education, 1945–1956*. Chapel Hill : University of North Carolina Press, 2000; and JAREŠ, Jakub – FRANC, Martin a kol. *Mezi konkurencí a spoluprací: Univerzita Karlova a* Československá *akademie věd 1945–1969*. Praha : Univerzita Karlova, Karolinum, 2018, (particularly chapters III and IV).

14 For the founding of the ČSAV, see JŮNOVÁ-MACKOVÁ, Adéla. Vládní komise pro vybudování Akademie věd. In FRANC, Martin – DVOŘÁČKOVÁ, Věra a kol. *Dějiny Československé akademie věd. I, 1952–1962*. Praha : Academia, 2019, pp. 106–137 and JŮNOVÁ-MACKOVÁ, Adéla. Vznik ČSAV a její první zákon, osud předchůdcovských institucí, kontinuita a diskontinuita. In FRANC – DVOŘÁČKOVÁ a kol. 2019, pp. 170–179. The founding of the Slovak Academy of Sciences was treated by HUDEK, Adam. Slovenská akadémia vied a umení v rokoch 1945–1952. Prerod SAVU do Slovenskej akadémie vied. In KOVÁČ, Dušan a kol. *Dejiny Slovenskej akadémie vied*.

The social sciences were then assigned to these new institutions.[15] The structure of the ČSAV in April 1954 included a philosophical-historical department comprised of three institutes; Historical, Archaeological and Ethnography and Folklore studies, and four cabinets, which were responsible for research on philosophy, art history and theory, pedagogical sciences and the work of historian and musical theorist Zdeněk Nejedlý, a communist intellectual, politician and the first president of the ČSAV.[16] The economics and law department was composed of the Economic Institute of the ČSAV, supplemented by cabinets of the history of the state and law, international law and the state and law in the USSR.[17] Five institutes and two cabinets comprised the language and literature department: the Institute for Czech Language, the Institute for Czech Literature, the Slavic Institute, the Institute of Russian Language, the Literature and History of the USSR (later the Czechoslovak-Soviet Institute) and the Oriental Institute, as well as the Cabinet for Modern Philology and a cabinet for the study of Greek, Roman and Latin.[18] The ČSAV included traditional disciplines, such as historiography, linguistics or ethnography, and at the same time institutionalised the ideologically important fields of research that were considered key for building socialism, such as economics and legal science. During the 1950s, this institutional structure expanded and then stabilised. In 1956, there was an independent Institute of Law, later the Institute of the State and Law, in which the previously independent legal sciences cabinets were housed.[19] Two years later, the Institute of Philosophy came into existence, soon becoming the centre of Marxist thought and holding theoretical discussions on the origins of reform communism at the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s.[20]

Stalinism demanded from the social sciences an unequivocal acceptance of Marxism-Leninism, including a retrospective confirmation of its accuracy through empirical research. The social sciences and humanities thus fulfilled a propagandistic function, serving as theoretical support for Stalinist policies. When Czechoslovak socialism experienced economic and political problems in 1953, they equally fell on the social sciences and as soon as criticism of Stalinism began, the social sciences lost the ground beneath their feet. If their only function was to promote and theoretically justify party policies, the end of Stalinism destroyed any legitimacy they had. The start of de-Stalinization was a major turning point for the social sciences, which began to move away from a propaganda based role to an emphasis on the expert positions.

The social sciences now shifted to a different model of politicisation, which was already in effect on the opposite side of the "Iron Curtain". The violent and chaotic policies of Stalinism would be replaced by governance based on scientific knowledge, advanced organisational

Bratislava : VEDA, 2013, pp. 69–86; and HUDEK, Adam – KLAČKA, Jozef. Vznik Slovenskej akadémie vied. In KOVÁČ a kol. 2013, pp. 89–105. The mutual relationship of both institutions in the period is mapped by HUDEK, Adam. ČSAV a SAV 1952–1956. In FRANC – DVOŘÁČKOVÁ a kol. 2019, p. 278–291.

15 The passage on the institutional anchoring and research focus of the social sciences and humanities in the 1950s comes from SOMMER, Vítězslav. Humanitní a společenské vědy v ČSAV. In FRANC – DVOŘÁČKOVÁ a kol. 2019, p. 580–601.

16 Cabinets were research units smaller than institutes.

17 The Economics Institute of the ČSAV was founded on 1 January 1954 from the Economics Cabinet of the ČSAV, see KAIGL, Vladimír. O stavu a úkolech československé ekonomické vědy. In *Věstník Československé akademie věd,* 1954, Vol. 63, No. 1–3, pp. 75–83.

18 III. valné shromáždění Československé akademie věd. In *Věstník Československé akademie věd*, 1954, Vol. 63, No. 4–6, pp. 207–209.

19 Pracoviště ČSAV k 1. lednu 1956. In *Věstník Československé akademie věd*, 1956, Vol. 65, No. 1–2, pp. 32–34.

20 For the structure of the ČSAV in 1958, see Sedmé valné shromáždění ČSAV. In *Věstník Československé akademie věd*, 1958, Vol. 67, No. 4–6, p. 227–229. Regarding the development of the Institute of Philosophy of the ČSAV, see MERVART, Jan. Filosofický ústav ČSAV. In FRANC – DVOŘÁČKOVÁ a kol. 2019, pp. 602–613.

methods and the latest technologies. Khrushchev's programme proclaimed a socialism that was not to be scientific only formally, but scientists and experts would play a central role in shaping the institutions and rules of the socialist state. They were to study society and seek ways to complete the "cultural revolution", with the aim of deepening the socialist character of the social structure, value system and lifestyle. Economists should solve economic problems and seek new approaches to organising and managing central planning at all levels – from the planning centre to the management of work and production in individual enterprises. Examples from legal science, political science and economics show the growing importance of social scientific expertise.[21]

In the mid-1950s, the revolutionary phase of socialism ended and a period of stabilisation began. This meant not only a policy of "raising living standards" and completing the collectivisation of agriculture, but also putting the final touches on socialist legislation and institutions. Economists, legal and political scientists were involved in a process labelled as the "completion of the building of socialism", officially culminating in the adoption of a new constitution in 1960.

Experts endeavoured to describe and explain the political and economic order that emerged in the country after 1948. There was a need to clarify phenomena such as the socialist revolution, the socialist state and the people's democracy. Even though the process of building socialism lay in seemingly unambiguous Marxism-Leninism, the theoretical definitions of the new order were wholly vague. The socialist revolution was the first issue to spark controversy between legal and political scientists. Adopted from the USSR, it offered a scheme of revolutionary processes based on the Soviet experience, however, Czechoslovak development after 1945 urged a different concept. The clash between a binding Soviet theory and the Czechoslovak reality encouraged a new theory for national variants of socialist revolution to be devised.

Discussions about revolution and the socialist state continued throughout the second half of the 1950s and exposed the limits of post-Stalinist social scientific thought.[22] This became a dispute between believers of the exclusive application of Soviet concepts and those who were trying to create a theory specific to the conditions of Czechoslovakia.[23] Although the debate took place on a highly abstract level and resulted in schemes for revolutionary developments in socialism and the people's democracy, it did bring some important

21 For a summary of the development of legal thought in Czechoslovakia in the years 1948–1989, see BOBEK, Michal – MOLEK, Pavel – ŠIMÍČEK, Vojtěch. *Komunistické právo v Československu: kapitoly z dějin bezpráví*. Brno : Masarykova univerzita, Mezinárodní politologický ústav, 2009.

22 For more details on the institutional development and activities of the legal expertise in the given period, see SOMMER Vítězslav. Experti, právo a socialistický stát: Právní věda v ČSAV a její činnost v letech 1952 až 1960. In *Soudobé dějiny*, 2016, Vol. 23, No. 1–2, pp. 118–136. From the many contributions to the discussion, for example, see the introductory text of the whole debate HOUŠKA, Jiří – KÁRA, Karel. Příspěvek k otázkám theorie revoluce a státu v zemích lidové demokracie. In *Filosofický časopis*, 1954, Vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 273–311 and discussions on the socialist revolution and people's democracy by Michal Lakatoš, Ivan Bystřina, Milan Hübl and others published in 1955 in the journal *Právník*. An important part of the discussion also ran in 1955 at a conference organised on the tenth anniversary of the liberation of Czechoslovakia. See KLIMEŠ, Miloš – KRÁL, Václav – ZACHOVAL, Marcel (eds.) *Otázky národní a demokratické revoluce v ČSR. Sborník příspěvků přednesených na konferenci Historického ústavu ČSAV 28. – 30. IV. 1955 v Liblicích*. Praha : ČSAV, 1955. Other articles on the revolution, people's democracy and the socialist state came out during the second half of the 1950s in *Filosofický časopis*, *Právník* and in *Nová mysl*, which was the central theoretical journal of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

23 A final round of discussion took place in 1961 at a conference on the role of the social sciences in building socialism and communism. See the articles in HOUŠKA, Jiří (ed.) *Základní teoretické otázky výstavby socialismu a komunismu ve světle výsledků společenských věd. Materiály konference o teoretických problémech výstavby socialismu a komunismu konané v Liblicích ve dnech 26. až 29. dubna 1961*. Praha : Nakladatelství Československé akademie věd, 1962.

findings. For one, the argument demonstrated that some experts did respond to local developments and sought to rethink the theoretical framework of socialist statehood, while also staying within the scope of rigid Marxism. Economists reacted to these developments with a debate about ownership, which ran until the end of the 1950s. They aimed to define a socialist concept of ownership that would correspond to the changes that had occurred in the country over the previous decade.[24] The goal was not only to modify and adapt the existing theory, but also to create a basis for policy making. Theoretical innovation was a prerequisite for including experts in the discussion on reform policies implemented in the 1960s. These debates showed that a tier of experts could be assembled that was not focused on propaganda, but on solving the practical problems associated with governance.[25]

The most affected discipline was economics. Although economists were directly engaged in the introduction of central planning at the turn of the 1940s, the economic failures that followed led not only to their political repression, but also to the building of a new economic scholarship. In the mid-1950s, leading representatives of the ČSAV admitted that the "political economy of socialism" was one of the least developed areas of the social sciences. In April 1956, František Šorm, a biochemist and leading functionary of the ČSAV declared that "Czechoslovak economics is at the beginning of its development" and suffers from a lack of "mature professional staff".[26] The economy was forced to reckon with the legacy of Stalinist economics and meet the demands placed on it by the troubled centrally-planned economy.

In the mid-1950s, KSČ leadership announced its intention to decentralise planning and make economic management more "scientific". This would lead to the increased qualification of workers, the introduction of computer technologies and the use of new planning methods based on cybernetics.[27] Economists praised the simplification of planning and a greater independence for enterprises. "Bureaucratic" methods of management were to be replaced by economic management based on expertise and experts would educate managers and develop processes to facilitate the efficient organisation of individual enterprises, and also of the economy as a whole. At the turn of the decade of the 1950s, economists were already working on the first economic reforms and developed *teorie řízení* – the Czechoslovak equivalent of management studies – performing interdisciplinary research in business management and workforce organisation.[28]

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24 Discussions on ownership emerged from an article by economist Čestmír Kožušník. See KOŽUŠNÍK, Čestmír. Vlastnictví a ekonomické vztahy. In *Nová mysl*, 1959, Vol. 13, No. 7, pp. 693–708. For a summary of Czechoslovak discussions on ownership in socialism, see HORVATH, Julius – SOMMER, Vítězslav. From Nationalization to Privatization. Understanding the Concept of Ownership in Czechoslovakia (1948–1990). In KOVÁCS, János Mátyás (ed.) *Populating No Man's Land: Economic Concepts of Ownership under Communism*. Lanham : Lexington Books, 2018, pp. 87–111.

25 In its extreme form, this trend was shown by the Czechoslovak critique of Yugoslav self-management, which clearly aligned with a very statist conception of socialism. It described Yugoslav socialism as an anarchist project and characterised the centralized socialist state as natural and the only possible institutional platform for building a socialist society. See KUČERA, Eduard. *K soudobému revizionismu (K praxi a teorii soudobého jugoslávského revizionismu)*. Praha : Čs. společnost pro šíření politických a vědeckých znalostí, 1960.

26 ŠORM, František. Usnesení strany a vlády a hlavní směry vědecko-výzkumné činnosti. In *Věstník Československé akademie věd,* 1956, Vol. 65, No. 5–6, pp. 278–299, quote on p. 290.

27 Usnesení celostátní konference Komunistické strany Československa. In *Celostátní konference Komunistické strany Československa. Zvláštní číslo Nové mysli, červen 1956*. Praha : Rudé právo, 1956, pp. 246–272.

28 The preparation of the first economic reforms at the end of the 1950s was described by economist Kurt Rozsypal in his memoirs: ROZSYPAL, Kurt. *Vývoj plánovitého řízení v netržních podmínkách v letech 1953–1964:*

Legal science also assisted in the building of the socialist state, including the writing of a new Czechoslovak constitution, which was adopted in 1960 as the first law of the republic and officially designating Czechoslovakia as a socialist state. Although party leadership labelled the constitution a collective work between the party and the people, the text was in fact prepared by a group of elite legal experts.[29] This was likewise true of other legislative changes, such as civil law. Legal scholars discussed possible forms of socialist legislation and with the blessing of the KSČ leadership, formulated key legal documents. In this way, the rules by which the socialist state was to function were thus created.

During this period, the foundation was laid for development of a social strata of experts, which was an important component of the professional middle class. In the 1950s, a generation of experts educated after 1948 grew up and they either identified directly with the goal of building a functioning and prosperous socialism, or at least, pragmatically accepted the fact that expert activity is an opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills. At this time, the socialist state further exercised political control over the sciences and expertise, though an extensive research infrastructure was created simultaneously. Along with the ČSAV and universities, this included a growing number of research institutions falling mainly under the control of ministries or affiliated to enterprises. Furthermore, there was an increasing demand for experts directly in practice, as managers for example. This decade of shaping the rules, institutions and apparatuses paved the way for the golden era of experts in the reformist 1960s.

Reflections, Innovations and Experiments (1960s)

The building of socialism officially culminated in 1960. Though this could have appeared to be a sign of stabilisation after the turmoil of the 1950s, the reality was much more complicated. Half-hearted de-Stalinization revealed new issues and caused another crisis. Czechoslovakia fell into serious economic trouble in the first half of the 1960s, which put the weaknesses of central planning on display and worsened the crisis of communist ideology. Revelations connected with the fall of the "cult of personality" demolished the seemingly robust structure of Marxism-Leninism. A skeleton in the closet from these times was the legacy of political repression in the 1950s, the investigation of which proceeded slowly as party elites tiptoed around the crimes of Stalinism.[30]

A disturbing past was not the only problem. Aside from economic difficulties, there was a whole set of issues that can be summarily referred to as the development strategies

(paměti). Praha : Vysoká škola ekonomická, 1999. Regarding the origin of Czechoslovak management theory, see SOMMER, Vítězslav. Manažerská odysea: Teorie řízení v Československu v padesátých až osmdesátých letech 20. století. In *Soudobé dějiny*, 2017, Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 285–310.

29 Regarding the contribution of legal experts in the preparation of the 1960 Constitution, see SOMMER 2016, Experti, pp. 131–135.

30 For the ideological crisis, see KOPEČEK, Michal. *Hledání ztraceného smyslu revoluce: zrod a počátky marxistického revizionismu ve střední Evropě 1953–1960*. Praha : Argo, 2009; KOLÁŘ, Pavel. *Der Poststalinismus: Ideologie und Utopie einer Epoche*. Köln : Böhlau, 2016 a MERVART, Jan – RŮŽIČKA, Jiří. *„Rehabilitovat Marxe!": československá stranická inteligence a myšlení post-stalinské modernity*. Praha : NLN, 2020. Political contexts are mapped out by BARNOVSKÝ, Michal. *Prvá vlna destalinizácie a Slovensko: (1953–1957)*. Brno : Prius, 2002; BLAIVE, Muriel. *Promarněná příležitost: Československo a rok 1956*. Praha : Prostor, 2001; PERNES, Jiří. *Krize komunistického režimu v Československu v 50. letech 20. století*. Brno : CDK, 2008; KAPLAN, Karel. *Kronika komunistického Československa. Doba tání 1953–1956*. Brno : Barrister & Principal, 2005; KAPLAN, Karel. *Kronika komunistického Československa. Kořeny reformy 1956–1968: společnost a moc*. Brno : Společnost pro odbornou literature, Barrister & Principal, 2008.

of socialism. This involved the reform of not only central planning, but technological innovations, functions of the political system, a reassessment of the pros and cons of consumer society and the changes in human labour associated with the advent of automation. What's more, control of information and an inflexible ideology resulted in a lack of credible, up-to-date data on the economy and society. In addition to contemplating and implementing development strategies, it was also necessary to develop a functioning empirical analysis of social and economic reality.

Scientists and experts were targeted to undertake these tasks. A reform policy followed the developments of the preceding decade resulting in, for instance, an expansion of research infrastructure including the founding of the ČSAV Institute of Sociology in 1965, which completed the revival of sociology in Czechoslovakia.[31] Social scientific expertise secured an extensive institutional base with research institutes connected to the government, ministries and enterprises, whose scope was applied research. For example, the Institute of Management (1965) was founded and served under the Czechoslovak government. Its task was training managers and developing the field of management studies. Other institutions focused on urbanism and architecture, research on living standards, population policy, computer technology and cybernetics, and organisational science.

Historiography has thus far mostly examined the elite research teams, which were the expert basis for reform policies. Prestigious expert collectives included the interdisciplinary team of philosopher Radovan Richta, researching the "social and human implications of the scientific and technological revolution", the economic team of Ota Šik preparing economic reform, a team of political scientists and lawyers headed by Zdeněk Mlynář dealing with reconstruction of the political system and a sociological team, led by sociologist Pavel Machonin, studying the social stratification of Czechoslovak society. All were organised on the basis of cooperation between Communist Party leadership and the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences.[32] There were plenty more expert groups, tasked with preparing the groundwork for reform policies. In 1968, this institutional base covered topics ranging from the organisation of enterprises through foreign policy, up to the creation of futuristic visions of socialist post-industrialism.

The last item shows that the 1960s saw not only the development of expert institutions, but also the "expertisation" of communist ideology. While references to science in Stalinist ideology were formal and in conflict with crude political interventions into academia, reform communists followed Khrushchev's programme of "scientisation" and turned science, expertise, and technological development into the building blocks

31 For the renewal of sociology in Czechoslovakia, see VOŘÍŠEK, Michael. *The reform generation: 1960s Czechoslovak sociology from a comparative perspective*. Praha : Kalich, 2012.

32 For the history of interdisciplinary teams and their influence on Czechoslovak reforms in the 1960s in particular, see HOPPE, Jiří et al. *„O nový československý model socialismu": čtyři interdisciplinární vědecké týmy při ČSAV a UK v 60. letech*. Praha : Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, 2015; HOPPE, Jiří – SOMMER, Vítězslav. How the "Richta Team" Was Born: The Scientific and Technological Revolution and Political Decision-making in Czechoslovak Reform Communism. In *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung / Journal of East Central European Studies*, 2020, Vol. 69, No. 4, pp. 495–518; SOMMER Vítězslav. Scientists of the World, Unite!: Radovan Richta's Theory of Scientific and Technological Revolution. In ARONOVA, Elena – TURCHETTI, Simone (eds.) *Science Studies during the Cold War and Beyond: Paradigms Defected*. New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, pp. 177–204; SUK, Jiří. *Veřejné záchodky ze zlata: konflikt mezi komunistickým utopismem a ekonomickou racionalitou v předsrpnovém* Československu. Praha : Prostor, 2016; SKILLING, H. Gordon. *Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution*. Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1976.

of communist ideology as a way to resolve the theoretical confusion of post-Stalinism.[33] The resolutions of the 13th Congress of the KSČ (1966) serve as an example, elevating the theory of a "scientific and technological revolution", until then only the subject of academic hypothesis, to the central motif of the party programme.[34] Similarly, the KSČ *Action Programme* of April 1968, the main political document from the Prague Spring, highlighted scientific knowledge and expertise as prerequisites for the successful transition to a more democratic and prosperous socialism.[35]

Both the establishment of expert institutions and the innovation of communist ideology led to an increased professional and political self-confidence among experts. They viewed the reforms of socialism as a great experiment, reassessing the foundation of party politics. Their political confidence was exhibited through demands for participation in political decision-making and also better remuneration for their work. They called for the introduction of a less egalitarian model of compensation, which would structure income based on education and work performance.[36] Wages would be incentive and not favour workers at the expense of the intelligentsia. This principle of fair wages based on performance and expertise was a critical reaction to Stalinist workerism. Experts claimed that they not only deserved higher pay, but also greater social prestige and a corresponding position in the power hierarchy. Researchers from the ČSAV, who actually created the backdrop for reform policies, succeeded at least partially in the fulfilment of such political ambitions. However, experts from less prestigious institutions that remained in the shadow of the ČSAV had more difficulty asserting themselves.

Reform-oriented expertise was inclined towards technocratic solutions. This was expressed, for example, in research on management. Management studies scholars referenced the successful application of management methods in Western Europe and the USA, arguing that strengthening the managerial class is necessary for successful economic reform. Managers were meant to become "socialist entrepreneurs", who had the power to run enterprises as for-profit businesses. They were no longer simply the executors of instructions from the planning centre but heads of enterprises, who were to use all their knowledge and skills without restrictive control from superior bureau-

33 Khrushchev summarised this political programme in his speech at the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party in October 1961. See *Documents of the 22nd Congress of the CPSU – Volume I., Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Delivered by N. S. Khrushchev, October 17, 1961*. New York : Crosscurrents Press, 1961. An example of a discussion of the importance of science for the future of socialism is the book *Věda a naše současnost* [*Science and Our Present*], containing contributions of important representatives of Czechoslovak academia: biochemist and ČSAV chairman František Šorm, microbiologist Ivan Málek and philosophers Radovan Richta and Ladislav Tondl. See *Věda a naše současnost*. Praha : Academia, 1969. For the ideas of post-industrial socialism and communist techno-optimism, see *Civilizace na rozcestí* [*Civilization at a Crossroads*], prepared by Radovan Richta and his research team (first published in 1966). For an English translation of the third extended edition, see RICHTA, Radovan et al. *Civilization at the Crossroads: Social and Human Implications of the Scientific and Technological Revolution*. Prague : International Arts and Sciences Press, 1969. From period considerations on the social role of the science, see ŠORM, František. *Věda v socialistické společnosti: (poznámky k otázkám společenské funkce vědy, řízení a organizace vědecké práce)*. Praha : Academia, 1967; and MÁLEK, Ivan. *Otevřené otázky naší vědy: boj nového se starým v dnešní naší vědě. 2. [*část*], Úvaha*. Praha : Academia, 1966.

34 Programme materials of the congress, see *13. sjezd Komunistické strany Československa: Praha, 31. 5.–4. 6. 1966*. Praha : Svoboda, 1966.

35 The Action Programme of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. In REMINGTON, Robin Alison (ed.) *Winter in Prague: Documents on Czechoslovak Communism in Crisis*. Cambridge, MA : MIT Press, 1969, pp. 88–136.

36 An extensive debate among economists on this issue was published in 1966 in the journal *Ekonomická revue*: Od nivelizace k denivelizaci. In *Ekonomická revue*, 1966, Vol. 1, No. 6, pp. 276–287 and no. 7, pp. 313–321.

crats. On a more theoretical level, the "scientific and technological revolution" theory mirrored these technocratic tendencies, linking the future of socialism with the development of science and technology. Radovan Richta and his colleagues characterised scientists and experts as the most important initiators of the development towards communism. In this position, they were poised to replace the working class. Post-industrial socialism demanded a new power hierarchy in which a government of experts would replace the government of the working class and party apparatchiks.[37]

The newly acquired, professional self-confidence was also evident in more intensive communication across the "Iron Curtain". Leading Czechoslovak experts and thinkers, such as Radovan Richta and Ota Šik, considered the "new Czechoslovak model of socialism" as an alternative not only to Stalinism, but also to liberal capitalism. According to them, this was a model of socialism suitable for export to the West. Reform communist historians Miloš Hájek and Oldřich Janeček discussed the "Czechoslovak road to socialism" from 1945 to 1948, which they considered an attempt at a democratic way of building a socialist system. Unlike the Soviet and Yugoslav revolutions, which came from revolutionary violence and corresponded to the conditions of agrarian economies, the "Czechoslovak road to socialism" could serve as an example for similar socialist revolutions in the West. This was a revolution based not on a violent seizure of power, but on the building of social and cultural hegemony, just as Antonio Gramsci had imagined revolution in advanced industrial countries.[38] If such a vision of the "Czechoslovak road to socialism" was the basis of reform, the model of socialism that emerged from it was to be the foreshadowing of a global transformation to democratic socialism as a third way, between liberal capitalism and Soviet communism.[39] Reform-oriented experts considered themselves to be the creators of the socialism of the future, which was to overtake capitalism in terms of economic justice, technological development and the scope of citizen participation in the governance.

The self-assurance of these experts could also be seen in their efforts to change the rules by which the socialist state operated. Economic reform based on the concept of market socialism sought to reconfigure the relationship between the state and the economy, which required experimentation with management and planning as well as with employee self-government. An entirely untested experiment in the context of the whole Eastern Bloc was reform of the political system, demanding democratisation through the enabling of political competition. Although Czechoslovak reformists realised only the federalisation of the country, the reform efforts of legal and political scientists showed the extent of their experimentation with the institutions and mechanisms of the socialist state.

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37 SOMMER, Vítězslav. "Are we still behaving as revolutionaries?": Radovan Richta, Theory of Revolution and Dilemmas of Reform Communism in Czechoslovakia. In *Studies in East European Thought*, 2017, Vol. 69, No. 1, pp. 93–110.

38 JANEČEK, Oldřich. Dílo Antonia Gramsciho jako metodologické východisko ke zkoumání našeho přístupu k socialistické revoluci, ke zkoumání dějin čs. odboje. In *Historie a vojenství*, 1964, Vol. 13, No. 5, pp. 705–735.

39 JANEČEK, Oldřich. Kdy u nás začala socialistická revoluce? In LAČINA, Vlastislav (ed.) *Československá revoluce v letech 1944–1948. Sborník příspěvků z konference historiků k 20. výročí osvobození ČSSR*. Praha : Academia, 1966, pp. 96–100; and HÁJEK, Miloš. I socialismus má své vývojové etapy. In *Nová mysl*, 1969, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 135–136.

Experts Under the "Consolidation" (1970s and 1980s)

The Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 and the political changes that followed, known as "consolidation" or "normalization", ended the era of reforms. Unlike the previous period, when social scientists and experts linked Marxism with different intellectual traditions, "consolidation" ended any experimentation and declared allegiance to a "pure" Marxism-Leninism. Another change was stricter institutional control, which punished the reformists by transferring them to less prestigious institutions, reassigning them to less important positions, banning from publishing completely, or outright dismissal from employment with no opportunity to pursue their professional careers. Some prominent reform-oriented scholars and a number of economists, including Ota Šik, emigrated to the West. Many experts retreated from their previously held reformist positions and adapted to the demands of "normalization". The most significant example of such a pragmatic solution is that of Radovan Richta, who in 1969 publicly renounced the most pro-reform aspects of the "scientific and technological revolution" theory and thus ensured the continuation of his career as director of the most important social scientific institution in the country.[40]

"Normalizers" labelled reform communism as an ideological deviation from Marxism-Leninism. As such, the experts had to more cautiously anticipate the political implications of their research. Attempts at achieving any greater independence from political institutions also ended. The expert was no longer to be an autonomous co-creator of policies, but a subordinated worker in centralised decision-making. The new consolidation regime demanded a large-scale deployment of expertise, but allocated service positions in the power hierarchy to experts and subjected them to strict political control. Cold War rhetoric, which mobilised against "bourgeois theories" and called for a clear demarcation between Marxist-Leninist scholarship and its Western counterparts, also returned to the language of the social sciences.

"Consolidated" socialism continued to employ an extensive base of experts, but applied stricter supervision, not only over the experts, but over all aspects of society. In the case of economic policies, KSČ leadership characterised the development of the 1960s as the subordination of properly prepared economic reform to the political interests of "right-wing revisionists". In December 1970, resolution of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the KSČ declared a return to the policy of "improving the socialist system of economic management". It was ratified in 1965 and confirmed by the 13th Congress of the KSČ in 1966. An essential part of the regime's "consolidation" policy was removal of the "revisionist sediments" that had "deformed" reforms in the second half of the 1960s.[41] According to party resolutions and expert analyses from the early 1970s, the "revisionists" had misused economic reform to pursue anti-socialist goals – they excessively criticised central planning, undermined the socialist concept of ownership, sought to make the market the primary mechanism of economic governance, intend-

40 This was the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the ČSAV, which was established during the course of the "consolidation" by merging the Institute of Sociology and the Institute of Philosophy of the ČSAV. Richta remained director of the institute until his death in 1983.

41 FREMER, Miloslav – KOLÁČEK, František – ŠEDIVEC, Václav. *Některé rysy revizionismu v politické ekonomii v druhé polovině 60. let v ČSSR*. Praha : Svoboda, 1973, pp. 12–13.

ed to convert enterprises into market entities and analysed capitalism uncritically.[42] The reformists allegedly aimed to rebuild the socialist economy into a social-market economy in the style of Western European countries. The result, according to the "normalizers", was not only the politicisation of reforms, but also the destabilisation of the Czechoslovak economy.

The new party elite did not require economic experts to return to Stalinist economics, but preferred that they continue in their expertise, though without experimentation and reformist political demands. Experts deprived of direct political influence were to pragmatically resolve operational issues and respect the authority of central institutions as all modifications to economic policies were subject to the control of ministries, planning authorities and state or party leadership. Experts operated in a centralist and bureaucratic system, in which any change required a blessing "from above" and careful manoeuvring between the snares put to them by planning, ministerial, corporate or party bureaucracy in pursuit of their own power interests.

The experts were not expected to reform socialism, only to maintain and stabilise the system so that it functioned without any disruption to the power relations established after the fall of the Prague Spring. Expertise without real decision-making power was now in the hands of political elites and bureaucrats as an instrument for maintaining political and social stability. The experts were obliged to respect the depoliticised nature of the public sphere while managing the country's economic and social development as mere technical problems. In the first half of the 1970s, Czechoslovakia could thus appear as an island of stability in a turbulent world compared with the West or neighbouring Poland. While capitalism fell into economic crisis, Czechoslovakia's economy could temporarily boast of modest growth, full employment and generous social policies. There were no strikes in the country, demonstrations or even political disputes over systemic questions. The "normalization" leadership controlled the state and economy technocratically; they did not have to face serious ideological challenges or social pressure "from below" in the form of an active workers' movement for example. Prior to the Charter 77 initiative, political opposition remained significantly suppressed. Experts were not to meddle in political decision-making but to come up with ways of solving, for example, economic, welfare and urban planning issues or environmental problems.

Individual experts were required to be disciplined, cautious and pragmatic, resigning themselves to unambitious proposals. When confronting the state and party apparatus, it was best to proceed with baby steps towards minor gains and partial victories. Small, informal collectives arose that promoted professional standards and were sceptical of ideological demands. Non-conformist professional activities took place within these groups, often going beyond the typically mediocre professional competencies of the "consolidated" social sciences. Falling into pragmatic conformism and cynical resignation was also a danger for the experts. The politically and ideologically controlled expertise needed to complete a lot of pointless work, supplying the bureaucratic apparatus with formal research reports, for example. If experts wanted to take on something new and politically nonconformist, it required a great deal of commitment, influential

42 Ibid.

allies, the ability to negotiate and a willingness not only to take risks, but also to make morally and professionally troubling compromises.[43]

The social sciences found themselves in greater international isolation after 1968 as "normalization" limited contact with the West. Economists, sociologists and other researchers were obliged to work more with theories and methods anchored in Marxism-Leninism, and in particular, with the results of Soviet scholarship. During this period, the social sciences partially lost the ability to operate internationally, across the "Iron Curtain". The time when Czechoslovakia could boast of social scientific knowledge intended for a global public, such as the reformist theory of "the scientific and technological revolution" or the economics of market socialism and the "third way", was now gone. Experts were supposed to deal with domestic problems, especially those related to the "national economy", and potentially to solve, along with colleagues from the USSR, East Germany or Poland, issues specific to socialist countries. The reputation earned in the 1960s dissipated as the social sciences were no longer of interest on the international level. Inside the academic community and in the expert milieus, a feeling of falling behind the West began to grow. Following a brief period of international fame in the second half of the 1960s, Czechoslovakia withdrew to a position in the social scientific periphery, with normalization delivering a serious blow to expert confidence. Here in this moment, it is possible to locate the origins of intellectual self-marginalisation, which remains a significant characteristic of the social sciences in Central and Eastern Europe.

Expertise was preferentially focused on questions associated with operation of the centrally planned economy. For example, economists, sociologists and management studies scholars did research in social planning, which hoped to apply the processes of economic planning in the management of society.[44] Social planning studied the role of work collectives and enterprises in welfare policies and created rules for developing communal strategies for individual enterprises. It followed the corporatisation of social policy in the 1970s, i.e. the partial transfer of welfare expenses to enterprises in order to care for the essential social needs of their employees (health care, housing, catering, education, leisure, cultural activities). In the long run, the aim of this welfare arrangement was to deepen the socialist character of society.[45] Social planning was a notably

43 The institutional history of social scientific expertise in the 1970s and 1980s has not yet received sufficient attention. Thus far, the only case study on this topic is from NEŠPOR, Zdeněk. „Šedá zóna" v éře tzv. normalizace: Dům techniky ČSVTS Pardubice v dějinách české sociologie. In *Sociologický časopis / Czech Sociological Review*, 2014, Vol. 50, No. 1, pp. 107–30. For an analysis of the functioning of censorship and its impact on the academic community, see OATES-INDRUCHOVÁ, Libora. *Censorship in Czech and Hungarian Academic Publishing 1969–89: Snakes and Ladders*. London : Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. On the writing of the social and cultural history of expert communities in the "normalization" era, see SOMMER, Vítězslav. Průvodce světem socialistické technokracie. Prozaická tvorba Stanislava Váchy jako historický pramen. In *Střed*, 2020, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 98–123.

44 For the development of social planning in Czechoslovakia, see SOMMER et al. 2019, pp. 101–106; and SOMMER, Vítězslav. Managing Socialist Industrialism: Czechoslovak Management Studies in the 1960s and 1970s. In CHRISTIAN, Michel – KOTT, Sandrine – MATĚJKA Ondřej (eds.) *Planning in Cold War Europe: Competition, Cooperation, Circulations (1950s–1970s)*. Berlin; Boston : De Gruyter, 2018, pp. 237–260. From the large amount of period literature on social planning, see, e.g., STÍBALOVÁ, Běla. *Sociální plánování v ČSSR a SSSR*. Praha : ÚVTEI, 1976; BAUEROVÁ, Jaroslava et al. *O sociálním plánování*. Praha : Práce, 1972; KUTTA, František et al. *Teorie a praxe sociálního plánování a programování v ČSSR*. Praha : Svoboda, 1980.

45 For an analysis of the corporatisation of the welfare state in Czechoslovakia, see RÁKOSNÍK, Jakub – TOMEŠ, Igor et al. *Sociální stát v Československu. Právně-institucionální vývoj v letech 1918–1992*. Praha : Auditorium, 2012, pp. 170–191.

technocratic discipline, which applied economic planning methods to welfare policies and social engineering.

The sociology of the "socialist way of life" or "socialist lifestyle" was closely associated with social planning.[46] Czechoslovak "consolidation" attempted to establish a new culture of everyday life reflected in the value system, cultural and consumer preferences, and leisure-time activities. The establishment of a "socialist lifestyle" would be the final result of welfare policies introduced by social planning. Sociologists who adopted the "socialist lifestyle" concept from the USSR in the early 1970s claimed that, unlike capitalist society which was disintegrating under the weight of class conflicts and cultural fragmentation, socialist society was characterised by a high level of class as well as cultural and ideological uniformity. This homogeneous social order was therefore to create a homogeneous lifestyle. Through planned social and cultural policies, plus the suppression of social and cultural phenomena that deviated from the normative ideas about a "socialist way of life", every Czechoslovak citizen was to gradually adopt an obligatory lifestyle.

An overall emphasis on economic issues influenced other areas of expertise. In the 1970s, research on the organisation of production, the labour force and the working environment was among the central topics of Czechoslovak sociology.[47] Expertise focused on computer technologies, with automation closely tied to the study of economic planning. Computers were thought to enable the smooth flow of information in the planning system, which would permit more flexible and efficient management of the economy from a single centre.[48] The introduction of computers was intended to lead to the building of so-called automated control systems in enterprises and the central level.[49] Moreover, the logic of economic development was essential for forecasting expertise (*prognostika*). The aim was to predict long-term economic and social trends and create a complex system of forecasting that would serve central planning.[50] In short, after 1968, the experts were supposed to help sustain technocratic authoritarianism and

46 For the most important texts of the sociology of the socialist lifestyle, see VEČERNÍK, Jiří. K problému konceptualizace socialistického životního stylu. In *Sociologický časopis*, 1972, Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 249–260; FILIPCOVÁ, Blanka. Morální norma a jednání v utváření socialistického způsobu života. In *Filosofický časopis*, 1976, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 35–41; FILIPEC, Jindřich – FILIPCOVÁ, Blanka. Socialistický humanismus a životní způsob. Socialistický způsob života jako objekt poznání a řízení. In *Filosofický časopis*, 1976, Vol. 24, No. 6, pp. 940–960; FILIPCOVÁ, Blanka – FILIPEC, Jindřich. *Různoběžky života. Zápas o socialistický životní způsob*. Praha : Svoboda, 1976; FILIPEC, Jindřich – FILIPCOVÁ, Blanka. *Socialistický způsob života – skutečnost i program*. Praha : Horizont, 1980. For a brief outline of the theory of the "socialist lifestyle" in Czechoslovakia, see SOMMER, Vítězslav. The Last Battlefield of the Cold War: From Reform-Oriented Leisure Studies to Sociological Research on the "Socialist Lifestyle" in Czechoslovakia 1950s–1989. In SOLOVEY, Mark – DAYÉ, Christian (eds.) *Cold War Social Science: Transnational Entanglements*. Cham : Palgrave Macmillan, 2021, pp. 225–254.

47 KOHOUT Jaroslav. Plánování sociálního rozvoje kolektivů pracujících podniku – současná teorie a praxe v ČSSR. In *Sociologický časopis*, 1973, Vol. 9, No. 6, pp. 624–632; KOHOUT Jaroslav. Plánování sociálního rozvoje kolektivu socialistického podniku a úkoly podnikového sociologa. In *Sociologický časopis*, 1973, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 155–160; KOHOUT Jaroslav. *Sociální analýza a řízení socialistického podniku: Vznik – pojetí – aplikace*. Praha : Práce, 1976. For labour force research, see KALINOVÁ, Lenka. *Máme nedostatek pracovních sil?* Praha : Svoboda, 1979.

48 For example, see MARKUŠ, Jozef. *Teória optimálneho plánovania a fungovania socialistickej ekonomiky: (vývin a otvorené otázky)*. Bratislava : VEDA, 1978.

49 The idea of automated control systems was summed up by BUKÁČEK, Zdeněk – MAZEL, Bohumil. *Metodika projektování ASŘ:* Úvod *do projektování automatizovaných systémů řízení*. Praha : Ústav technických a ekonomických služeb, 1974. See also SOMMER et al. 2019, pp. 106–110.

50 SOMMER, Vítězslav. Forecasting the Post-Socialist Future: Prognostika in Late Socialist Czechoslovakia, 1970–1989. In ANDERSSON, Jenny – RINDZEVIČIŪTĖ, Eglė (eds.) *The Struggle for the Long-Term in Transnational Science and Politics: Forging the Future*. London; New York : Routledge, 2015, pp. 144–168.

the so-called scientific management of socialist society meant using available scientific knowledge for centralised control of social and economic processes.[51]

Conclusion

Vannevar Bush's report summarised the hopes which political elites of the West, the East and the Global South put into the alliance of the state and expertise. Forty years of the Cold War brought the development of technologies and infrastructures that would not have been possible without such close cooperation. However, at the end of the era, there was notable scepticism towards the idea that scientific knowledge and expert governance would solve all of humanity's problems. The failure of post-war modernist ideas of progress was especially visible in the Eastern Bloc where it was evident that the combination of an authoritarian state, a centrally planned economy and governing through expertise had not led to general prosperity or social equality.

The 1980s bore the signs of deepening economic and environmental problems in Czechoslovakia. The consolidation regime was losing its fragile social support, which manifested not only in the rising activities of the political opposition, but also in the local version of Perestroika (Czech: *přestavba*). Despite Czechoslovak political elites being more cautious and ideologically conservative than Mikhail Gorbachev and his collaborators in the USSR, public debates about the current state and the future of socialism showed the degree of dissatisfaction in society with developments after 1968. The rhetoric of Perestroika emphasised a necessity of public debate and political changes. Although calls for openness and economic and political reconstruction by party elites were often only formal statements, it was enough to break down the ideological foundations of "normalization". Moreover, the economic and environmental crises represented urgent problems that needed to be addressed and the experts again were supposed to help. Efforts to save socialism brought the further mobilisation of expertise and freed it, to certain extent, from its strict political and ideological control.

However, the general crisis of state socialism also led to a crisis of expertise. There was not only a growing disillusionment with the state of affairs among experts, they also rediscovered a willingness to express criticism and search for an escape from the prevailing intellectual and political conformity. Economists and sociologists began to complain about the technocratic clumsiness and ideological limitations of the political and economic system, in which it was very difficult to promote any change or even simply discuss unorthodox solutions to economic and social problems. Although experts criticized the inefficiency of central planning or environmental devastation even before Perestroika, their opinions, supported in their view by scientific facts, could not penetrate the bureaucratic machinery of the state and failed to arouse the interest of party elites. The experts warned of increasing problems and offered solutions, though at the same time were aware of their limited power in comparison to influential bureaucrats and officials. Dissatisfaction with the governance by state and party elites was shared by the experts, who otherwise had very different theoretical backgrounds and political beliefs: economists looking to the legacy of the Prague Spring, their colleagues betting

51 The Soviet concept of scientific management of socialist society in the era of "developed socialism" was introduced by AFANASJEV, Viktor Grigorjevič. *Vědecké* řízení *společnosti*. Praha : SPN, 1977.

on the possibilities of the free market, sociologists calling for the renewal of civil society, and even ideologues close to party leadership thinking about the gradual disintegration of the Communist Party's "leading role". The latter knew well that the KSČ was unable to handle the situation and due to economic difficulties, the grey economy and pervasive corruption, it was losing any remnants of support in society. The consensus among the experts was that the crisis is a reality, it needs to be resolved and that it is they themselves who know how to do it.

Disappointment from their weak position in the hierarchy of power was entwined with notions of their own social importance. Once Perestroika, like the Prague Spring, relaxed control over public debate and identified expertise and diligence as the means of achieving necessary changes, another stellar hour for the experts came again, twenty years later, when the theoretical paradigm and ideological dogma that underpinned the policy of expertise after 1968 had collapsed. Economists increasingly and more openly promoted reforms based on introducing a market economy, thus paving the way for a later resurgence of capitalism. At the lower levels of economic planning, the problems of enterprise management and the call for an autonomous position not only for enterprises but managers too, was a central topic. However, as in the 1960s, the idea of employee self-government resonated.[52] Sociologists began to write more critically about social problems and opened a debate on the technocratic trap that their field had fallen into in the 1970s.[53] The state of the environment also became one of the main discussions at the end of the decade, not only among experts, but also in the broader public.[54]

The relationship of state socialism to social scientific expertise seems to be a development from the "expertisation" of the social sciences in the second half of the 1950s to the experiments and innovations of the 1960s. After 1968, expertise was subordinated to the pragmatic needs of the consolidation regime. Thus, Perestroika left the impression that the experts would be taken back to 1968 by a time machine. The end of the 1980s, however, brought a different politics of expertise than the 1960s. Following the activities of experts in the years of "normalization", the Perestroika expertise focused primarily on issues related to the economy. Pragmatic economic reductionism so typical of expert activities after 1968 influenced expertise of the late 1980s and early 1990s. It is possible to see a similar continuity in the focus on day-to-day economic issues and the underestimation of interest in the long-term development of the state and society. Expert projects transcending the narrow economic perspective did not attain privi-

52 The debates on economic transformation are analysed by RAMEŠ, Václav. *Trh bez přívlastků. Spory o podobu vlastnické transformace v porevolučním Československu*. Praha : ÚSD AV ČR, 2021.

53 Critical texts by Slovak sociologists from the late 1980s in particular addressed this topic: FRIČ, Pavol – GÁL, Fedor – DIANIŠKA, Ivan. Profesiová orientácia sociológa vo svetle spoločenských očakávaní. In *Sociológia*, 1988, Vol. 20, No. 1, pp. 71–80; BÚTOROVÁ, Zora – DIANIŠKA, Ivan. Samoregulácia vedeckého spoločenstva. In *Sociológia*, 1988, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 141–155 and KRIVÝ, Vladimír. Sociotechnika: Možnosti a hranice. In *Sociológia*, 1988, Vol. 20, No. 4, pp. 417–425. In the Czech part of Czechoslovakia, where stricter political control of the social sciences than in Slovakia predominated, the platform for critical sociology was primarily the samizdat journal *Sociologický obzor*, published between 1987 and 1989 and largely written by sociologists Josef Alan and Miloslav Petrusek. The journal's archive is available on the Internet: http://scriptum.cz/cs/periodika/sociologicky-obzor

54 For the debate on the environment, see VANĚK, Miroslav. *Nedalo se tady dýchat: ekologie v* českých *zemích v letech 1968 až 1989*. Praha : Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR v nakl. Maxdorf, 1996; and JEHLIČKA, Petr – SMITH, Joe. Trampové, přírodovědci a brontosauři. Předlistopadová zkušenost českého environmentálního hnutí jako předzvěst ekologické modernizace. In *Soudobé dějiny*, 2017, Vol. 24, No. 1–2, pp. 78–101.

leged positions and only rarely offered a more comprehensive image of social and political change.[55] The mainstream of expertise prioritized economic reform, on which everything else was to be based.

The role of expertise in the first years post-socialism is still awaiting a systematic historiographical elaboration.[56] Current research indicates that the building of capitalism was based, to a great measure, on the primacy of the economy. That is, on an idea close to simplified Marxism; the transformation of the economic base, which is the main task of experts and politicians, will be the starting point for social and political change. Post-socialist experts therefore followed the economism of the consolidation regime. Further research will show to what extent these preliminary conclusions can be revised thanks to a more thorough analysis of the activities of legislative experts, experts working in the international NGO sector focused on building civil society, environmentalists in state institutions and NGOs, sociologists mapping societies in transition and experts based in various European institutions and supranational organizations, among others. The challenge for future historiography is to validate or deny the hypothesis that the economic reductionism of "normalization" predetermined the form of expert interventions in the period of post-socialist transformation.

55 An important exception was the comprehensive proposal for "green" political and economic reforms presented in 1989 by cybernetician and environmentalist Josef Vavroušek. See VAVROUŠEK, Josef. *Životní prostředí a sebeřízení společnosti*. Praha : Institut řízení, 1990.

56 For the first major contributions to the topic, see KOPEČEK, Michal (ed.) *Architekti dlouhé změny: expertní kořeny postsocialismu v Československu*. Praha : Argo, 2019.

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FORUM HISTORIAE

Building and Testing Trust Within a Socialist Dictatorship: The Case of Czechoslovak Experts in Africa Pre- and Post-1968

Barbora Buzássyová

Abstract

BUZÁSSYOVÁ, BARBORA. Building and Testing Trust Within a Socialist Dictatorship: The Case of Czechoslovak Experts in Africa Pre- and Post-1968.

This article explores the foundations of trust between Czechoslovak state bodies and experts selected for foreign service in Africa. The focus is on the means through which this trust was challenged during long periods of separation from socialist ways of life, ways which were reinvented after the systemic political changeover in Czechoslovak administration after August 1968. Drawing on the concept of "navigation", it examines the strategies experts developed to earn and restore credibility in the eyes of party authorities after the total disintegration of prior networks of trust following the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia. During their tenure abroad, experts established trust networks on various levels – not only with Czechoslovak political representatives, but also with other experts in common agencies and even officers of the Czechoslovak Intelligence Service. These personal ties proved to be instrumental for negotiating future career prospects after the stormy years of 1968–1969. However, contrary to popular belief, this article demonstrates that it was less political attitude and more the economic potential of the experts' international positions that determined their ongoing credibility as "honoured" citizens.

Keywords: Czechoslovakia, experts, credibility, socialism, trust network, Africa

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How were the networks of trust between citizens and state authorities developed and maintained under a socialist dictatorship? Scholars have established the considerable significance of trust, or lack thereof, in the function of socialist regimes and mobilization popular support.[1] However, these works have mostly focused on the strategies of renegotiating social contracts between the state and society after the fall of Stalinism, which subsequently helped to stabilize the Eastern European region. In general, communities of trust can be defined as social networks which unite people through shared interests, though the concept of trust usually carries with it a number of inherent characteristics. For instance, Russian historian Alexey Tikhomirov offers the following insights into the notion of trust: it stabilizes relationships and simplifies the social environment; it is the foundation of reciprocity and cooperation based on

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1 JONES, Polly. *Dilemmas of De-Stalinization. Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*. London: Routledge, 2006; CROWLEY, David – REID, E. Susan (eds). *Pleasures in Socialism: Leisure and Luxury in the Eastern Bloc*. Evanston : Northwestern University Press, 2010; SCHATTENBERG, Susanne. Trust, Care and Familiarity in the Politburo. Brezhnev's Scenarios of Power. In *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Euroasian History*, 2015, vol. 16, no. 4, p. 835-858.

a balance of rights and duties; and it is a resource for collective action, which plays a crucial role in defining friends and enemies, negotiating status or inequalities and outlining the moral and immoral patterns of daily life.[2] With this in mind, he coined the term "socialist regimes of trust and distrust," in which the Communist Party played a leading role in defining, objectifying and distributing trust and distrust. The party instrumentalized the phenomena of trust and distrust as tools for managing its personnel policy and creating tension between ordinary people and "honoured" citizens—those who had already earned trust.[3] The vernacular of trust and distrust thus allowed state authorities to instil ritualized social practices and develop a predictable behaviour for its citizens.

This phenomenon of "trusted" and "untrustworthy" is closely tied to wider scholarly discussions about the social dynamics between states and citizens in socialist dictatorships. Instead of dividing the most common reactions to ultimate control in to black and white categories of "true believers" (loyal) and "resisters" (disloyal), scholars have recently started to discuss numerous "shades of grey"[4] between the two poles, uncovering a whole range of strategies through which people learned to survive under the least unfavourable terms, yet within the conditions dictated by the regime. Confronted with harsh restrictions and pervasive scarcity, people took their own initiatives to exploit opportunities – when available – for personal gain. German historian Alf Lüdtke, a leading figure of the *Alltagsgeschichte*, in an attempt to comprehend the everyday experience of factory workers in Nazi Germany termed this behaviour "navigation."[5] "Navigation" defines the ways through which people learned to sidestep the rules in order to manage the world around them and reap some benefits from the difficult situation they found themselves in.[6] Cooperation and compliance were often passports to normal life, with rewards and privileges reserved for those who conformed and an arduous path for those who did not. This brings us to the question of strategic loyalty; how citizens earned credibility from state authorities, how they exploited it to meet their own ends and how they re-established trust after political unrest. In light of such theoretical considerations, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

- What strategies did experts[7] adopt in order to earn trust and credibility from official authorities—what experience and/or qualities supported their nomination to cadre reserves and were there any examples of deliberate manipulation?
- When dispatched as experts to countries outside the socialist bloc, how did they navigate through the newly-established web of relations—towards Czechoslovak intelligence service officers' requests for cooperation, towards their western and local colleagues and towards other members of the Czechoslovak community?

2 TIKHOMIROV, Alexey. The Grammar of Trust and Distrust under State Socialism after Stalin: An Introduction. In *Journal of Modern European History*, 2017, vol. 15, no. 3, p. 314-315.
3 TIKHOMIROV 2017, p. 320.
4 See CORNER, Paul. Dictatorship revisited: Consensus, coercion, and strategies of survival. In *Modern Italy*, 2017, vol. 22, no. 4, p. 435-444.
5 LÜDTKE, Alf (ed.). *The History of Everyday Life. Reconstructing Historical Experience and Ways of Life*. Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1989.
6 See for instance GELLATELY, Robert. *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2001; LIM, Jie-Hyun Lim. Coercion and Consent: A Comparative Study of "Mass Dictatorship". In *Contemporary European History*, 2004, vol. 13, no. 2, p. 249-252; CORNER, Paul (ed.). *Popular Opinion in Totalitarian Regimes. Fascism, Nazism, Communism*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2009.
7 This text understands experts as: individuals qualified in a certain area of expertise who were, by a decision of the Czechoslovak state authorities, sent abroad to participate in development-related projects for various African administrations. The focus is on experts in "top" positions, i.e. ministerial advisers, employees of UNESCO departments, and scientists and managers in scientific or educational institutions and industrial companies.

- In what ways were these various types of loyalties and alliances expressed?
- Considering the shared experience of working abroad with all the privileges and obligations the foreign service was due, were there any examples of internal, "sub-loyalties" within expert groups that challenged the existing social contract with the Czechoslovak authorities?
- What happened to these networks of trust after Soviet suppression of the Prague Spring in August 1968?
- What strategies did experts develop to restore credibility in the eyes of the new leadership?

The study is divided into two main sections. The first part examines developments in the state management of expert service abroad through the 1960s and 1970s, focusing on the selection criteria and expectations of state bodies linked to the expert service. The next section centres on specific, micro-histories of former experts, examining particularly the circumstances of their nomination to the cadre reserves and their reactions to authorities' demands for the expression and performance of loyalty. As illustrated in the following paragraphs, the relationship between the subject and object of trust was not static, in which both actors behaved according to fixed rules. Instead, the power dynamics were ever-changing and relied on constant negotiation.

The expert service was a stable component of a broader system of technical development aid which the Czechoslovak government provided to countries of the Global South since the beginning of decolonisation in the mid-1950s. Nikita Khrushchev's appeal to "active foreign policy" freed Eastern European leaders from the constraints of Stalinist isolation and opened doors for various forms of East-South cooperation. In a commitment to the revived agenda of socialist solidarity, Czechoslovak authorities, led by President and First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (ÚV KSČ) Antonín Novotný, were keen to flatter the new African leaders and assist with the all-around development of post-colonial peoples. Expert services offered by Czechoslovak institutions to African leaders included a wide range of activities, from advisory positions at individual ministries to the posting of professors and lecturers to schools and universities. Technicians, researchers and industrial specialists were also sent to establish a scientific and industrial base for a "third world" economic take-off. Development aid programmes were thus considered not only a vital strategy in shaping the future political path of beneficiary administrations, but also as a gateway to further economic expansion of Czechoslovak—and more broadly Eastern European—industry to non-socialist markets.

During their tenure abroad, Czechoslovak experts developed relationships with other colleagues from their workplaces, either from the capitalist west or from the ranks of the local elite. Against this background, it comes as no surprise that many of them became targets of the Czechoslovak Intelligence Service (part of Czechoslovak State Security, the *Státní bezpečnost* or STB), who sought to uncover confidential information about political developments in Africa, or even better, about the financial agreements of African regimes with western firms. Czechoslovak experts abroad were subject to the 4th department of the First Directory of the Ministry of Interior (counter-intelligence division), which administered official travels abroad, including cases of emigration and returnees.

Who Could be Trusted and for How Long? The Challenge of Volatile Loyalties of the Experts in Africa

Growing numbers of Czechoslovak citizens abroad posed a challenge to the highly circumspect state administration. In response to official concerns about the experts' behaviour, various measures were implemented for more effective control and management of their services. The first such state regulation on Czechoslovak citizens' work abroad was made in December 1961 by a document titled *The Principles for Selection, Preparation and Assessment of Czechoslovak Experts' Activity Abroad* (*Zásady pro výběr, přípravu a hodnocení činnosti československých pracovníků v zahraničí*), which narrowed the group eligible for foreign service to only those absolutely reliable politically—excluding "members of former exploiting classes and their close relatives, representatives of former reactionist parties, workers who betrayed the socialist republic and fled to the West or their relatives living in capitalist countries, [...] workers whose close relatives were sued for anti-State activity".[8] Also ruled out were Czechoslovak citizens who led "bourgeois lifestyles", which was in the eyes of state officials, associated with a bad work ethic, greed, pursuance of personal—meaning material—interests, alcoholism, unprincipled and apolitical action and a disorganized family life.[9] In contrast, the attributes which qualified experts as trustworthy included "firm morals and character" as they could "solemnly represent our socialist regime by their honourable action and personal lifestyle."[10] Surprisingly, despite a strong emphasis on moral qualities, membership in the Communist Party was not mandatory. Experts were also required to be experienced professionals who ideally could speak the official language of the country of their stay abroad (in Africa, knowledge of English and French was necessary).

Candidates who successfully passed the selection process were kept in the cadre reserves for service abroad. Eligible experts were apparently divided into several categories, differing in range of imposed political control, expectations about performed loyalty and additional tasks. For instance, experts dispatched through the multilateral system of assistance were subject to international law, which profoundly limited the Czechoslovak authorities' power to supervise and organize their actions. This challenge of divided loyalties of experts and official representatives in the United Nation (UN) system was touched on in *The Report of the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations* issued in 1945, which classified serving the UN as a "higher interest," superior to more narrow national interests and prejudices.[11] The first *Standards of Conduct for International Civil Service* drafted in 1954 ascribed "international loyalty" to UN staff, but at the same time acknowledged that "international and national loyalties may conflict", and compelled governments and organizations not to force experts to choose between them.

The activities and duties of experts in the UN system were thus regulated by separate statutes, which also prescribed a general strategy towards particular international organizations.

8 Národní archiv České republiky (NA ČR), fond (f.) Ústřední výbor Komunistické strany Československa (ÚV KSČ), Antonín Novotný – zahraničí, inventární číslo (inv. č.) Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí (MZV) – činnost Zastupitelských uřadů (ZÚ) v ČSSR a v zahraničí, kartón (k.) 3, case: Zásady pro činnost čs. pracovníků v zahraničí, Prague, 2. December 1961.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 United Nations Digital Library, Report of the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations, PC/20, 23. December , 1945, Chapter 8, § 4.

The first document of this kind was prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MZV), headed by Václav David and endorsed by the ÚV KSČ in March 1963, under the title *The Positioning and Management of Czechoslovak Experts in the Secretariats of International organizations* (*Umístňování a řízení čs. pracovníků v sekretariátech mezinárodních organizací*).[12] The main concern of this document, however, was not exactly to question the international loyalty of experts, but rather to regulate their income by proposing extra taxes—for some, this meant up to 70% of their salary. The authors assumed that this income from payroll deductions could then be transferred to the state budget.

Nevertheless, the question remains as to what extent this proposal was really put into action. According to documents in the State Security Services Archives in Prague, any attempt to impose such payroll deductions on experts based in a multilateral system of assistance usually ended in vain, mainly because Czechoslovak authorities feared that the experts would lodge official complaints to the organization's headquarters, which would then put the Czechoslovak government in a very uncomfortable situation.[13] Such episodes indicate that the level of trust between the Czechoslovak government and "their" experts in the UN system varied. Other signs even imply that multilateral experts often used their proclaimed adherence to "international loyalty" as an excuse to avoid cooperation with the STB or taking on extra assignments for Czechoslovak foreign policy interests.[14]

The activities of the experts during their tenure were—at least on paper—supervised by the Czechoslovak Permanent Mission to corresponding international organizations or the nearest Czechoslovak embassy (*Zastupiteľský úrad*, ZÚ). Czechoslovak diplomatic representatives demanded a demonstration of loyalty from the experts through various means. Usually, they were asked to collect information about the internal relations of particular organizations, to seek technical documentation from specialized departments or to engage in industrial espionage, etc. Apart from these tasks, the representatives of permanent missions and the ZÚ were instructed to guide the experts on influencing decision-making within international agencies in such a way that would benefit the Czechoslovak economy. In optimal conditions, experts were expected to lobby for Czechoslovak projects or secure transfer of Czechoslovak commodities and services within particular projects:

> Close attention should be paid to those Czechoslovak employees who could push the realization of the organization's action in a way which would be profitable for the Czechoslovak socialist republic (ČSSR), in terms of hard currency profit. This includes the purchase of various raw materials and commodities in the ČSSR and appointment of our scientific institutes in charge of research projects, etc. Such opportunities the experts in secretariats of specialized international organizations have particularly, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, UNESCO, the WHO, etc.[15]

12 NA ČR, f. ÚV KSČ, Antonín Novotný – zahraničí, inv.č. MZV – činnost ČSSR v mezinárodních organizacích, k. 4, case: Činnost československých zástupců v sekretariátech mezinárodních organizací, Prague 14. March 1963.

13 Archiv bezpečnostních složek (Archives of the Security Services, ABS), f. A11: Odbor pro mezinárodní styky, inv. č. 1220, Systém vysílání Československých státních příslušníků do OSN – poznatky, Prague 1970.

14 In 1970, an STB officer in Dar es Salaam reported UNESCO experts' claims for "neutrality" in international relations. See ABS, f. Hlavní správa rozvědky Sboru národní bezpečnosti (SNB) – svazky (I.S – svazky), reg.č. 11690 (arch. č. AS 17630 I.S) – podzväzok reg.č. 11690/326 I.S (arch. č. AS 14626 I.S), Čs. expert na univerzite v Dar es Salaam, without date, ca.1970.

15 NA ČR, f. ÚV KSČ, Antonín Novotný – zahraničí, inv.č. MZV – činnost ČSSR v mezinárodních organizacích, k. 4, case: Činnost československých zástupců v sekretariátech mezinárodních organizací, Prague 14. March 1963.

The state thus relied on experts for a number of important tasks. This dynamic shows that the experts gained a certain leverage in negotiating with the state power. With trust being mutually beneficial, it is likely that if experts agreed to work in the best interests of the Czechoslovak regime within international affairs, they demanded something in return—usually preservation of their economic privileges. Anytime the Czechoslovak authorities made attempts to disturb this balance of advantages, the experts rebelled and the whole trust network fell apart.

This volatility of cooperation between the experts and the ZÚ is evident in a number of reports prepared by official state correspondents for the MZV. According to these reports, the majority of cases of uncooperative behaviour occurred when Czechoslovak officials attempted to infringe upon the economic privileges of the experts and compel them to pay the extra taxes. A classic example is the situation of Czechoslovak experts in Ghana, whose perpetual disregard for state instructions developed into a recognised issue over the course of the 1960s.

The state correspondent in Accra, the capital of Ghana, "Dvořák", interpreted the experts' defiance as the result of a "long separation from life in Czechoslovakia", something that in his eyes led to "[attempts to set up] private businesses, complaints about salaries and criticism of Polytechna's practices".[16] As a result, the experts "do not pay the extra taxes from their foreign income to Polytechna, they spend money on whatever they like and ignore Polytechna deputies' urgent warnings."[17] A critical situation concerning supply services and inflation in a number of African countries only compounded the problem. For instance, the Czechoslovak state correspondent in Guinea, Bohuslav Málek, complained in 1970 that the combination of increased taxes and high prices of foodstuffs in the specialized shops for international clientele in Guinea resulted in experts struggling to make ends meet. Under such circumstances, many experts were forced to find side work. As an example, it was quite common for Czechoslovak doctors or professors at medical faculties to set up private medical practices.[18]

In the report cited above, "Dvořák"[19] also made several interesting observations about the quality of experts' political preparation, remarking:

> The experts who work outside the capital in various parts of the country, often in very isolated places, are badly influenced by the local environment, which negatively affects the results of socialist education in ČSSR. It would be necessary to strengthen the experts' connection with the homeland and improve their political training provided by Polytechna's deputy in Ghana and the ZÚ.[20]

16 Polytechna was one of the Czechoslovak foreign trade corporations established in 1959 as an executive body of the Ministry of Foreign Trade. Their main function was to mediate commercial agreements with foreign states. Specifically, Polytechna was responsible for facilitation, purchase and sale of industrial licences, technical projects, research, development, engineering and consulting services, including technical aid.

17 Archiv Ministerstva zahraničních věcí České republiky (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech republic, AMZV ČR), f. TO – T 1965-1969, Ghana, k. 1, inv. č. 202/211, case 21, Spolupráce ZÚ s experty v II. pololetí 1964, Accra, 8. December 1964.

18 AMZV ČR, f. TO – T 1970-1974, Guinejská republika, k. 1, inv. č. 203/113, case 3, Čs. vědecko-technická pomoc Guinejské republice. Politickohospodářská zpráva č. 9, Conakry 4. December 1970.

19 In this text, code names of STB officers as well as ideo-conspirators are indicated by quotation marks.

20 AMZV ČR, f. TO –T 1965-1969, Ghana, k. 1, inv. č. 202/211, case 21, Spolupráce ZÚ s experty v II. pololetí 1964, Accra, 8. December 1964.

This falling trust between Czechoslovak authorities and experts working on long-term contracts in remote areas of Africa was also mentioned in the regular evaluation reports issued by state correspondents in the late 1960s. In 1967, the state correspondent in Accra, "Jarošík", reported that communication with experts working outside of Accra was basically reduced to "collecting taxes for Polytechna."[21] Conversely, the ZÚ maintained regular contact with the experts living in Accra and Kumasi, where the so called *stranícke skupiny* (clubs that united all Communist party members in a particular town) were established. These displaced party organizations apparently played a crucial role in maintaining cohesion within Czechoslovak communities by organizing social events, such as International Women's Day or New Year's Eve etc., which in effect, facilitated more effective control of communication with persons outside this trusted circle.

The correspondent also expressed serious concerns about the moral qualities of some dispatched experts:

> Many incidents proved that the selection and preparation of experts is insufficient, and in some cases irresponsible if not shocking. I am concerned particularly about the political maturity of dispatched employees, their character attributes such as integrity, honesty, diligence and willingness. Many experts not only lack these elementary qualities of individuals and citizens coming from a socialist society, but they excel in greed, jealousy and mammonism, and at every cost.[22]

He complained that experts lacked an "awareness" about their responsibilities towards the ZÚ, refused to pay membership fees to the *základní organizace KSČ* (the basic organization of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, ZO KSČ), did not read the party daily or other Czechoslovak press and completely avoided "communist party life."[23] It can be concluded that the longer experts stayed abroad, the more inclined they were to "turn native" and become accustomed to a lifestyle incompatible with socialist citizenship. The sense of shared identity as a necessary condition for loyalty seemed to slowly fade away, and with that also the sense of duty towards the Czechoslovak government.

The disintegration of the former trust networks culminated in the years 1968–1969. Liberalizing tendencies of the new Czechoslovak administration led by Alexander Dubček[24] also had a profound impact on the nature of the social contract between the experts abroad and state authorities. Even prior to this period, Czechoslovak experts in Africa more or less freely travelled to western countries without receiving any formal permission, or at times even despite official refusal. *Pars pro toto* is a fitting explanation for the experience of a Czechoslovak lecturer at the University of Cape Coast, who in 1967 decided to go on a 3-month study trip to the USA and Canada despite outright

21 AMZV ČR, f. TO – T 1965-1969, Ghana, k. 1, inv. č. 202/211, case 21, Styky ZÚ s československými expertmi v roku 1967 – zpráva, Accra 17. April 1968.
22 Ibid.
23 AMZV ČR, f. TO – T, 1965-1969 Ghana, k. 1, inv. č. 202/211, case 21, Styky ZÚ s československými expertmi v roku 1967 – zpráva, Accra 17. April 1968.
24 The newest publications about Dubček's era and Prague Spring include SCHULZE WESSEL, Martin. *Der Prager Frühling. Aufbruch in eine neue Welt*. Stuttgart : Reclam Verlag, 2018; MICHÁLEK, Slavomír – LONDÁK, Miroslav et al. *Dubček*. Bratislava : VEDA, 2018; BISCHOF, Günter – KARNER, Stefan –RUGGENTHALER, Peter (eds.). *The Prague Spring and the Warsaw Pact Invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968*. New York : Lexington Books, 2010.

rejection by the MZV.[25] In a letter to the MZV, he argued that many Czechoslovak experts arranged trips to the USA without notifying the embassy. But what makes this case interesting is the MZV's impotent response to the whole incident. It seems that neither the MZV nor any other authority imposed any disciplinary charges or made any attempt to dismiss the rebellious expert from Ghana. However, the relaxation of strict state control was only temporary and the invasion of Warsaw pact troops in August 1968 initiated a new, fierce debate over the concept of loyalty in socialist Czechoslovakia.

"Consolidation" in the Former Trust Networks after 1968: Party-liners Are the Most Unreliable Communists?

The liberalizing tendencies in state administration that peaked in 1968 were later severely criticised by the newly elected, "normalized" party leadership led by Gustáv Husák. After the 14th Congress of the KSČ in May 1971, the party functionaries cemented a "firm alliance" with the Soviet Union and other states from the socialist bloc. This also affected the state's strategy of development aid, which should have been centred on "the final goals of socialism" and not merely reduced to pursuing "material advantages."[26]

The personnel makeover in the highest ranks of party and government bodies incited a series of "self-criticizing campaigns" against "rightist tendencies" in the state apparatus, with the expert service system particularly severely hit by these "crusades" against anti-socialist deviations. The new leadership of the MZV, headed by Bohuslav Chňoupek, accused the former administration of a rather benevolent selection, which "did not sufficiently consider the political criteria."[27] The consequences of such proceedings fully unfolded in the "critical years" of 1968–1969, when many experts "politically failed and adopted anti-socialist and anti-Soviet attitudes."[28] Tension between the new government and experts dispatched by former leadership culminated in a wave of emigration. Between the years 1968–1969—solely within the bilateral system of contracts—147 Czechoslovak experts emigrated, 18.7% of the total working in developing countries.[29]

In order to "fix severe deficiencies" in foreign service, the new government tightened regulations concerning work trips abroad. In June 1973, a document called *The Agenda for Party Authorization of Foreign Tours of Czechoslovak Citizens* (*Pořádek pro stranické schvalování zahraničních cest čs. občanů*) submitted by a secretary of the ÚV KSČ Vasiľ Biľak, was ratified.[30]According to the new statutes, every work trip, whether long- or short-term, must be approved by each level of the pyramidal party structure, from city committees up to the very centre. These measures sought to prevent another "anarchy" in international relations, as was seen in the years 1968–1969 when work trips abroad

25 AMZV CR, f. TO – T 1965-1969, Ghana, Ghana – neoprávněné cesty čs. expertů do zahraničí, Praha, 24. June 1967.
26 NA ČR, f. ÚV KSČ Gustáv Husák, k. 801 – Federální ministerstvo zahraničních věcí, case: Zahraničnopolitická činnosť po 14. zjazde KSČ, Praha 1971.
27 Ibid.
28 AMZV ČR, f. Porady kolegia 1953 – 1989, kniha č. 142, Vedecko-technická spolupráca ČSSR s rozvojovými krajinami. Správa MZV pre poradu kolégia ministra dňa 31. marca 1971.
29 The result measured in 1968, when the highest number of experts (785) worked in developing countries within a bilateral form of assistance. Ibid.
30 NA ČR, f. KSČ-ÚV, Praha – Předsednictvo 1971 – 1976 (02/1), sv. 83, archivní jednotka (arch. j.) 79/5, Pořádek pro stranické schvalování zahraničních cest čs. občanů, Prague, 1. June1973.

became "an important platform for antisocialist and rightist forces."[31] According to this document, the origin of such "anarchy" was the Presidium's decree from May 1968, which virtually allowed unconditional travel to capitalist countries as well as visits from these countries to Czechoslovakia. This practice swiftly ended in April 1969 and soon after in 1970, a Commission for the regulation of foreign relations was established. The Commission's activities considerably decreased the volume of travel abroad, from 80 thousand in 1969 to 7 139 in 1970 (aside from recreational tours).[32]

The consolidation process of Czechoslovak communities in Africa led to a total disintegration of former trust networks between the experts and STB officers. It is worth noting that a vast majority of former ideo-conspirators[33] and diplomats who were sent abroad in the second half of 1960s openly supported Dubček's regime and refused to cooperate further with representatives of the STB. The case of Ján Šebík serves as a good example. The Czechoslovak ambassador in Giunea since 1965 became a leading figure of the anti-Soviet protests in Conakry. In the aftermath of these demonstrations, an STB officer in Conakry known as "Helan" reported that trust between ideo-conspirators and *rezidentura*[34] was destroyed by "conflicting opinions over the developments in the party and society", "distorted conceptions about the work of STB officers home and abroad" and by a general "conviction that the work of our [STB] department is harmful and pointless."[35] "Helan" further noted that the current network of ideo-conspirators "fully politically failed, despite the fact that, for the most part, they were long-time party-liners."[36] The messy situation was exasperated by an instable radio connection, which made communication with headquarters in Prague rather difficult. STB officers were therefore apparently left in the dark about which rules of confidential communication were still valid and which had been discarded.

"Helan" also reported that in Conakry, there was a large group of experts who maintained suspicious contacts with western representatives. The internal sub-networks of trust established and maintained between experts of various nationalities as such became a double-edged sword—necessary for access to confidential information but dreaded for becoming too close with people out of trusted circles. During the post-1968 campaigns against "rightist deviations", many experts abroad actually made use of these personal connections with—mostly western—colleagues and diplomats to set the stage for emigration. For instance, according to STB reports, a Czechoslovak expert working as an agronomist at the Tanzanian Ministry for Lands and Water Development known as A. K. used his contacts with the West-German ambassador to emigrate to Vienna and later to Australia.[37]

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31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
33 Originally in Czech "ideo-spolupracovník" – in STB jargon, the lowest category of agents/conspirators.
34 The STB field office or group on foreign territory, which guided a wide range of activities encompassed in the "struggle against the imperialist intelligence". Its operations included collection of information on developments in international affairs and industrial espionage or surveillance of Czechoslovak expatriates.
35 ABS, f. Hlavní správa rozvědky SNB – svazky (I.S. – svazky)sv. č. 11179/116, Zpráva o bezpečnostní situaci na ZÚ KONAKRY, 25. June1969.
36 ABS, f. Hlavní správa rozvědky SNB – svazky (I.S – svazky), sv. č. 11179/116, Situace v čs. kolonii – zpráva, Conakry, 28. January 1969.
37 ABS, f. Hlavní správa rozvědky SNB – svazky (I.S. – svazky), sv. č. 1169/122, Emigrace čs. expertů v Tanzanii, Dar es Salaam, 15. October 1971.

In response to such reports, the government enacted decree no. 238 in 1973, which ordered all experts who "politically failed" to be dismissed and immediately terminated all international contracts longer than 5 years.[38] By this logic, any person who had spent more than 5 years abroad was simply expelled from the trusted circle, particularly when their tenure overlapped with the years 1968–69. During the next few years, existing expert networks were quite effectively purged of all "anti-socialist elements." The situation in Czechoslovak communities subsequently cooled down after the forced dismissal or emigration of the most insurgent individuals, and those who were lucky enough to keep their positions stopped openly voicing political opinions.[39]

The next part shows, however, that many experts tried to make use of their wide personal networks to restore the "disturbed trust" of party authorities and gain support for their own interests.

Case studies

As mentioned above, experts were divided into "experts in key positions" and "the rest", who differed in the degree of trust party authorities endowed them as well as in the level of loyalty that was expected in return. The first group was comprised of ministerial advisers, employees of UNESCO departments, scientists and managers in scientific institutions and industrial companies. The second, mostly of technicians and mid-rank employees. This division was rather logical—the "experts in key positions" regularly met with important social figures and actively participated in debates with significant international impact. Thereby it could be assumed that Czechoslovak authorities were extremely concerned about the credibility of experts sent to high-ranking positions to ensure full support and cooperation in the strategic sectors of foreign policy. From the other side, successful candidates enjoyed a number of privileges, at least in the 1960s—they could promote their research internationally, consult with other experts in their field, have access to literature and laboratory equipment unattainable in Czechoslovakia that time, integrate into internationally-sponsored projects, improve language abilities and boost career prospects. That being the case, what were the loyalty-markers that determined if experts were sent or stayed abroad and how was this "trust" exercised in the long term? The following case studies demonstrate three variants of typical (dis)loyal behaviour by Czechoslovak experts abroad, from a standing party-member, non-party individual and former party-member.

Case I: Reliable Party-Liner

The first look into the process of trust-building between experts and authorities comes from the story of O. J., a senior assistant at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering at the Czech Technical University in Prague (ČVUT). After a series of Czechoslovak-

38 Nevertheless, archival sources indicate that the withdrawal of the experts rarely happened before the official expiration of their tenure. Or rather, the official request for their immediate return to the CSSR was delivered but simply ignored. This is probably the reason why many experts integrated in development projects backed by the UN emigrated as late as 1971–1975. By 1970, Czechoslovak authorities registered only eight cases of emigration among the experts involved in multilateral system, though by the end of 1973, the number increased to 25. NA ČR, f. KSČ-ÚV 1945 – 1989, Praha – Předsednictvo 1971 – 1976 (02/1), sv. 73, arch. j. 69/8, Čs. personálna politika voči sekretariátom medzinárodných organizácí, 1973.

39 ABS, f. Hlavní správa rozvědky SNB – svazky (I.S – svazky), sv. č. 11179/116, Morálněpolitická situace v čs. kolonii – zpráva, Conakry, 1. December 1969.

Ghanaian bilateral negotiations in 1964, he left to take a professorship at the University in Kumasi, Ghana, the largest city in the Ashanti region. The beginnings of O. J.'s association with the STB stretch back to 1959, when he worked as head of the Commission for Foreign Students at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering. He was evidently also a leader of the faculty's party group as well as a member of the faculty committee of the KSČ. According to a personal review written in 1959 by the head of the faculty, his work with foreign students was highly appreciated, "especially in recent times, when students from the capitalist countries of the Near East came to study here, he is doing wonderful propagandistic work [...]."[40]

O. J. was officially recruited in July 1960 under the code name "Jaroš." His first assignment entailed the personal profiling of Arab students at the ČVUT with the goal of selecting suitable candidates for counter-intelligence tasks.[41]It seems likely that the good impression "Jaroš" made during his first mission proved his credibility and prompted a successful nomination to the cadre reserves in 1962.

Nonetheless, his position in Ghana initially did not look so favourable. "Jaroš" was assigned to Kumasi, thousands of miles away from the Czechoslovak ZÚ in Accra, which made regular communication with the STB field office rather difficult. During his first two years in Ghana, cooperation with the STB remained irregular and rather unproductive. Things moved forward apparently only on O. J.'s own initiative in August 1966, when he personally approached two former officers he knew from his early days at the ČVUT. According to a report from the meeting, O. J. provided information about British radar technology production, which the Ghanaian government was considering purchasing. It turned out that in 1965 "Jaroš", took advantage of his social network at the University in Kumasi and was appointed a member of the official Ghanaian delegation headed to London to negotiate purchase terms.[42] The Ghanaian authorities seemed to strongly rely on his professional advice. At STB headquarters in Prague, these documents were identified as "interesting and instrumental for intelligence service."[43] Following this episode, O. J.'s cooperation with the *rezidentura* got a second wind. In December 1966, the STB administration decided to trust him with other missions, mainly profiling western experts and progressive students at the university, also to investigate the political mood among local intelligentsia after the *coup d'état* of Nkrumah's administration in February 1966.[44]

The close contacts he maintained with local elites as well as capitalist colleagues allowed him to relay a lot of confidential information about Ghanaian relations to other African countries—particularly Nigeria—and also about arms treaties with western states.[45] Throughout the entire sojourn in Ghana, STB officers held his work in high es-

40 ABS, f. Zpravodajská správa Generálního štábu československé lidové armády – svazky (ZS/GŠ – svazky), arch. č. OS-18579 ZSGŠ.
41 ABS, f. Hlavní správa rozvědky SNB – svazky (I.S – svazky), registrační číslo (reg. č.) 42890 I.S (arch. č. AS-11469 I.S), KS MV Praha – Záznam o verbovce, Prague, 26. July 1960.
42 ABS, f. Hlavní správa rozvědky SNB – svazky (I.S – svazky), reg. č. 42890 I.S (arch. č. AS-11469 I.S), Spol. Jaroš zaslání materiálů, 19. September 1966.
43 Ibid.
44 ABS, f. Hlavní správa rozvědky SNB – svazky (I.S – svazky), reg. č. 42890 I.S (arch. č. AS-11469 I.S), O. J. – pokyn ke kontaktu, Prague, 9. December 1966.
45 ABS, f. Hlavní správa rozvědky SNB – svazky (I.S – svazky), reg. č. 42890 I.S (arch. č. AS-11469 I.S), Schůze s I. S. Jaroš – záznam, Accra 24. January 1968.

teem. It is also worth noting that from 1970 until his departure, he functioned as leader of the party group in Kumasi.

Unfortunately, available documents are quiet about O. J.'s political attitudes towards the invasion by Soviet troops and the aftermath, which found him still in Kumasi. What is certain, "Jaroš" survived the post-1968 party purges and after returning, he took up his old position at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering at the ČVUT. In this case, collaboration with the STB proved to be mutually beneficial, allowing him to endure quite a rocky period without any devastating consequences to his professional or private life. As evidence of his unshattered credibility, in the 1970s, the STB were even considering a renewal of cooperation, this time focused on the activities of Chinese diplomatic personnel at their embassy in Prague. This project, however, never materialized officially due to O. J.'s lack of interest to take any form of action in this matter.[46] Moreover, in 1975, he resigned from his function as head of the foreign students' committee and so was no longer considered "promising" for the STB investigation.

Case II: Reliable Non-Party Individual

A different facet of the larger picture can be seen in the story of Czech professor of chemistry at the Slovak Technical University in Bratislava V. Š., who participated in the UNESCO project "Training of secondary school science teachers" for Africa. He spent his first term (1964–1967) in Ghana at the University College of Cape Coast and after successful completion of the mission, was offered another contract, this time at the Faculty of Science at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. It was during his second tenure in Africa, between the years 1968–1970, when STB officers became interested in him.

According to a brief summary of V. Š.'s career development attached to his file, during both terms in Africa, he was accompanied by his wife and young son. In contrast to the prior example, both V. Š. and his wife were non-party. STB records detail his activity only after 1968 so it is impossible to reconstruct the circumstances of his nomination or any motivation for application to the UNESCO post before this time. From the available documents it is observable, however, that after August 1968, he displayed an extraordinary loyalty to the socialist regime. An STB officer in Dar es Salaam (DES) described him as "a mindful citizen of the ČSSR, who understands the political development in our country."[47] It is worth noting that V. Š.'s cooperation with the STB intensified only in the post-1968 period, before he was utilized only as so-called *aktiv*.[48]

To make sense of V. Š.'s activities in the years 1970-1971, is essential to mention that in 1970, he requested an extension of the UNESCO contract, which was submitted in the time when Czechoslovak authorities tended to terminate experts' contracts early rather than to support extension. It thus seems plausible then that V. Š.'s mobilized loyalty was

46 He argued that at present, he maintained no contacts with anyone from the Chinese ZÚ. His precise words were that keeping contacts with any foreign ZÚ he "does not consider purposeful, beneficial" and perceived even as "dangerous". ABS, f. Hlavní správa rozvědky SNB – svazky (I.S – svazky), reg. č. 42890 I.S (arch. č. AS-11469 I.S), 1. správa FMV odbor 47 – obnovenie spolupráce, Prague, December 1971.

47 ABS, f. Hlavní správa rozvědky SNB – svazky (I.S – svazky), reg.č. 11690 (arch. č. AS 17630 I.S) – podzväzok reg. č. 11690/326 I.S (arch. č. AS 14626 I.S).

48 Jargon for "the unwitting source". Usually approached by an I.S or STB officer, unaware of their affiliation with the MV structures.

motivated by an effort to prove his credibility in exchange for a favourable review of his extension request.

His coordinating officer "Bílek" sent a report to headquarters in Prague in which he openly asked for positive consideration of the application:

> [V. Š.] strives to be as beneficial for us as possible. In comparison to other experts, even the party-liners, he maintains the most open attitudes towards the ZÚ. He does not argue that as a UNESCO employee, he should keep his neutrality, as some experts do, instead he advocates and appropriately promotes the ČSSR everywhere. Therefore, we also asked our headquarters to support his request for extension of the contract with the university in DES for one more year.[49]

However, things in Prague were apparently moving very slowly and therefore "Bílek" decided to urge the whole matter a little further by sending another letter, this time backed by a recommendation written by the chief of the 3rd department of the First Directory of the Ministry of Interior (MV), Miloslav Kachva. In this second letter, V. Š.'s exemplary behaviour in the months following the August 1968 was highlighted:

> Although both prof. V. Š. and his wife are not party members, they have positive relations to work, to promotion of our homeland and to the friendship with the Soviet Union. After August 1968, they often met with professors from socialist countries at the university and with the ambassadors of socialist states at my place.[50]

The report also implied that V. Š. informed the STB office in Tanzania about the activities of western experts and lecturers at the university. Additionally, "Bílek" underlined the economic potential of his position as a government advisor, especially in regard to the evaluation of Tanzanian kaolin reserves.[51]After this intervention, the Ministry of Interior of SSR granted permission for a contract extension and V.Š. was allowed to stay in Tanzania until 1971.

The V. Š. case illustrates how experts learned to make use of their older trust networks and personal connections in the Tanzanian government to re-build credibility in the eyes of the new leadership. Typical strategies included references to proper, pro-Soviet attitudes after the invasion of Soviet troops and a sense of patriotic duty towards Czechoslovakia. However, the crucial factor in restoring a "pragmatic" trust seemed to be the economic potential of each expert's position. It appears that state organizations believed that V. Š., as a government advisor responsible for the evaluation of natural resources, could influence decision-making for Czechoslovakia's benefit. His loyalty was proven during the international project tender for a ceramic factory in Tanzania. After receiving the list of project proposals, he promised to highlight the advantages of the Czechoslovak offer and agreed to pass competing projects on to Czechoslovak authorities for further investigation.[52]

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49 ABS, f. Hlavní správa rozvědky SNB – svazky (I.S – svazky), reg. č. 11690 (arch. č. AS 17630 I.S) – podzväzok reg.č. 11690/326 I.S (arch. č. AS 14626 I.S), Čs. expert nauniversite v Dar es Salaam, without date, ca. 1970.

50 ABS, f. Hlavní správa rozvědky SNB – svazky (I.S – svazky), reg.č. 11690 (arch. č. AS 17630 I.S) – podzväzok reg.č. 11690/326 I.S (arch. č. AS 14626 I.S), Š. – aktiv, 1. June 1970.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid., without date, ca. 1970.

Despite a rather fruitful cooperation, when V.Š. received an offer from UNESCO to participate in another project in January 1971, the Czechoslovak authorities refused another contract extension and V. Š.'s official tenure in Tanzania thus expired June 14, 1971. The final evaluation report issued by STB officer "Tichý" in May 1971 described him as a "dutiful citizen of the ČSSR who was well-aware of his moral duties towards his homeland. During his stay in Tanzania, he served as an excellent example for other experts and his attitude to the ZÚ was very good."[53] "Tichý" fully recommended V. Š. for further cooperation during his next stay abroad, but despite the good references, available documents imply that after returning to Czechoslovakia, V. Š.'s activities in Tanzania were subjected to several screenings. It remains unclear which part of the profile put his loyalty in question, though, spending three consecutive terms as a UNESCO expert was perhaps too long, even for an accredited co-operator. Although V. Š. initially struggled to find a proper job back in Czechoslovakia, he eventually took a research position in one of the Czechoslovak chemical companies. While such a move could be viewed as a downturn in his career, he did manage to stay in the field and was not prosecuted further. The strategic loyalty exhibited during the last two years of his stay in Tanzania perhaps prevented further damage. To his enduring credibility, unlike many other Czechoslovak experts in Tanzania, he never attempted to emigrate. The fact that in 1973, he was dispatched as an expert to the construction of a cement plant in Yugoslavia demonstrates clearly that V. Š.'s political integrity was no longer questioned.[54]

Case IV: A Renegade

A final account which illustrates the differing trajectories of Czechoslovak experts in Africa is the career of Slovak law expert V. Z. Originally a senior economist at the State planning commission of the Slovak National Council in Bratislava, he was officially recruited to the Intelligence Services as an ideo-conspirator in August 1965 in response to his appointment as advisor at the Guinean Ministry of Economic Development and Planning.[55] Besides professional qualifications, it was his family history which apparently helped establish credibility. His father was a member of the early generation of principled communists who joined the Communist Party of Slovakia (KSS) in the interwar period,[56] though, his mother and wife ostensibly did not have party membership. V. Z. himself joined the party only in 1956.

V. Z. was recruited within the framework of "economic affairs," which predominantly investigated the attempts of non-aligned and capitalist lobbyists to infiltrate into the Guinean national economy. In secret police documents, he appears under the code name "Králík." The list of V. Z.'s investigative reports on Guinean economic relations detailed for the Czechoslovak *rezidentura* in Conakry is quite long and very precise. It

53 ABS, f. Hlavní správa rozvědky SNB – svazky (I.S – svazky), reg. č. 11690 (arch. č. AS 17630 I.S) – podzväzok reg.č. 11690/326 I.S (arch. č. AS 14626 I.S), Vyhodnotenie spolupráce s aktivom Bera, Dar es Salaam, 30. May 1971.

54 ABS, f. Hlavní správa rozvědky SNB – svazky (I.S – svazky), reg. č. 11690 (arch. č. AS 17630 I.S) – podzväzok reg. č. 11690/326 I.S (arch. č. AS 14626 I.S), 1. správa FMV, odbor 47 – Vyhodnotenie spolupráce, 29. May 1974.

55 ABS, f. Hlavní správa rozvědky SNB – svazky (I.S – svazky), reg. č. 44261 I.S (AS-13161 I.S), Dr. V. Z. – získání ke spolupráci, Prague 28. April 1965.

56 ABS, f. Hlavní správa rozvědky SNB – svazky (I.S – svazky), reg. č. 44261 I.S (AS-13161 I.S), Záznam o verbovacom pohovore – Memorandum, Prague, 11. August 1965.

appears that "Králík" monitored the deliveries of food and technical supplies granted to the Guinean government, the spending of foreign development loans, business agreements and technical aid provided by western donors. Throughout the entire period, he was described as a very reliable co-operator.

A turning point in the prosperous cooperation between V. Z. and Czechoslovak authorities came with the inauguration of Alexander Dubček's administration in January 1968. "Králík", who was characterized by his coordinating STB officer "Pecháček" as "Slovak—federalist", apparently very carefully monitored the current political developments in the ČSSR, particularly the problem of Czech-Slovak national justification.[57]In this period, "Pecháček" noticed a subtle change in "Králík's" behaviour, especially his reluctance to submit promised economic analyses. "Pecháček" attributed this shift in attitude towards cooperation with the *rezidentura* to the "current psychosis spreading from the ČSSR", which made "Králík" anxious about the potential revelation of his collaboration with the STB, possibly discrediting a promising career in the UN.[58]

A tendency to limit meetings with STB officers intensified after the invasion of Soviet troops in August 1968. The event mobilized a number of violent protests in Czechoslovak communities across all of Africa, which openly criticised the Soviet leaders and the dismissal of Dubček's administration.[59] According to reports on the "moral and political situation in the Czechoslovak community in Conakry" issued between autumn 1968 and summer 1969, V. Z. was apparently actively engaged in the activities of a "rightist group." However, initially it seemed that his role in the anti-Soviet protests was rather rank-and-file, with the primary responsibility placed on Czechoslovak *chargé d'affaires* Jan Šebík. The first report very discretely pointing out flaws in V. Z.'s political behaviour after August 1968 was submitted in May 1969. "Pecháček" remarked that V. Z.'s performance in the "rightists' group" at the Czechoslovak ZÚ "left unpleasant imprints on the mutual relations between 'Králík' and rezidentura. Although Kralík understood the errors of his behaviour, he still did not restore his good relations to coordinating officer."[60]

Interestingly, despite these "unpleasant imprints", it seems that "Králík" continued cooperation with the *rezidentura* even after the anti-Soviet protests, submitting a number of interesting analyses concerning Guinean economic relations. It seems even that during 1969, he restarted his own initiative, apparently in an effort to prove an ongoing loyalty to STB headquarters. His endeavours eventually bore fruit as in 1969, he spent three weeks in the USA and Canada without arousing the least hint of suspicion among the MV's officers. Moreover, at the beginning of 1969 he managed to gain support for

57 The federalization of the Republic where the Slovaks would acquire a tantamount position to Czechs.

58 ABS, f. Hlavní správa rozvědky SNB – svazky (I.S – svazky), reg. č. 44261 I.S (AS-13161 I.S), I. zpráva MV 4. odbor, Schůzka s IS KRÁLÍKEM 29. April 1968. His change of attitude towards the STB is probably related to discussions about reforming the position, focus and legal status of the Czechoslovak Intelligence, which took place in Czechoslovakia that time. The leading figure of this reform movement was a newly appointed Minister of Interior, Josef Pavel (April 8, 1968). The key reform concerned the separation of the Intelligence Service from the Ministry of Interior, however, the invasion of Warsaw pact troops in August 21 put an end to whole process. Pavel himself resigned by the end of August, replaced by the conservative Jan Pelnař. For more on the reform movement in Czechoslovak intelligence see KAŇÁK, Petr – SVOŘÁKOVÁ, Jiřina – JUROVÁ, Zdeňka. *Československá rozvědka a Pražské Jaro*. Praha : ÚSTR, 2016.

59 The subsequent purges in personnel of the MV also affected "Králík"'s former coordinating officer "Pecháček", who was dismissed from Conakry in 1969.

60 ABS, f. Hlavní správa rozvědky SNB – svazky (I.S – svazky), reg. č. 44261 I.S (AS-13161 I.S), I. zpráva MV 4. odbor, Vyhodnocení spolupráce s ideospolupracovníkem „Králíkem", Prague, 4. May 1969.

relocation to the UN contract system and secure a nomination as head of the ZO KSČ in Conakry. It appears that his leading role in the anti-Soviet protests was fully disclosed only after withdrawal of his former coordinating officer "Pecháček" from Guinea in summer 1969.

A newly installed STB officer known as "Chmelař" identified him as the main orchestrator of anti-Soviet actions, which accelerated the decline of V. Z.'s trustworthiness. In September 1969, he was forced to leave his position as leader of the ZO KSČ in Conakry and was dismissed from the KSČ. Subsequently, in January 1970, instead of attending an internal interview, he sent a letter to the party committee stating that he was resigning from all political activity and declared an intention to devote his future life to family and work.[61] In January 1971, he also finished the contract with the UN. The last report from June 1971on V. Z.'s movement stated that he unexpectedly left Conakry with his wife and son, officially to spend their last holidays abroad in Spain, however, they never returned to the ČSSR. Final reports imply that they immigrated to Switzerland.[62] Although it is difficult to determine whether V. Z.'s role in the anti-Soviet protests was diminished initially due to his special relationship with the former coordinating officer—in a "we watch each other's back" way—or the need for a scapegoat for the whole action arose only later, it is clear that V. Z.'s strategic networking with the STB allowed him to survive the last two years in Guinea with all the privileges of a UN expert.

Conclusion

This study explored the dynamics of trust between Czechoslovak state bodies and experts selected for service abroad in Africa. The first section focused on the state expectations of expert service and the understandings of this duty developed by the experts themselves. From the perspective of state officials, the experts were expected to represent the socialist values and system and always act in favour of Czechoslovak commercial interests. At their departure, experts seemed to sign a trust contract with the Czechoslovak government in which both sides had certain duties and advantages. However, this contract began to disintegrate as soon as the state attempted to abuse the experts'—particularly material—privileges. When the balance of advantages started to swing towards the state, experts began to rebel, ignoring instructions, avoiding social events organized by officers at the Czechoslovak ZÚ and refusing to pay extra taxes. The state's ability to mobilize experts' loyalty abroad was thus rather limited, especially when they lived out of the country for too long or their places of work were in remote areas. It is obvious that the farther from the embassy they were, the more difficult it became for Czechoslovak authorities to keep experts' communication with people outside the trusted circle under control.

During their tenure abroad, experts naturally developed relationships with colleagues from capitalist countries as well as from local administrations. Many of them were therefore targeted for cooperation with the STB who sought to exploit these personal networks for Czechoslovak foreign policy interests. Experts thus established trust net-

61 ABS, f. Hlavní správa rozvědky SNB – svazky (I.S – svazky), reg. č. 44261 I.S (AS-13161 I.S), Králík – poznatky k jeho osobě. Conakry, 20. June 1970.

62 ABS, f. Hlavní správa rozvědky SNB – svazky (I.S – svazky), reg. č. 44261 I.S (AS-13161 I.S), Návrh na uložení do archivu, agenturní svazek č. 44261 Krycí jméno KRÁLÍK, Prague 8. December 1971.

works on various levels—not only with other experts but with their STB coordinating officers as well—which then could be skilfully utilized for their own benefit. The significance of relations between experts and the STB fully unfolded after August 1968 when older loyalties and ties towards representatives of the former administration were broken and experts were forced to learn to manoeuvre their lives around changing circumstances. During the turbulent years of 1968–1969, many experts made use of contacts with western experts and embassies to facilitate emigration. Others intensified cooperation with the STB to emphasise their continuing loyalty. Some cases showed that restoration or development of new trust relationships with the *rezidentura* had a profound impact on experts' future careers abroad as well as back home. Interestingly, although the political attitude of experts towards the invasion of Warsaw pact troops definitely played a role in deciding whether to keep or dismiss them from foreign service, or rather how quickly this will be done, the economic potential of their international post was also carefully considered. Their collective experience shows us that to survive "at the least unfavourable terms", the experts had to navigate through many layers of loyalties—to the party, family, foreign employers or even former coordinating officers, which often pursued different aims (aspirations to keep well-paid, international jobs, the sense of "patriotic duty" or, conversely, a desire to have nothing to do with a regime that destroyed the advances of the Prague Spring). However, after 1973, whether reliable conspirator or not, virtually a whole generation of experts who were dispatched abroad during the "critical years" was withdrawn from foreign service. The length of time spent abroad and particularly where the "critical years" were spent thus became new criteria for measuring the credibility of candidates for expert service in the next decade. Although some of them, like V. Š., managed to be sent abroad again, it was only after several years back in Czechoslovakia, apparently to make sure they re-internalized the "correct" viewpoints and lifestyles of socialist citizens.

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FORUM HISTORIAE

The Genesis of Political Distrust Towards the "Sixty-Eighters" in Czech Politics Over the Course of 1989

Kristina Andělová

Abstract

ANDĚLOVÁ, Kristina. The Genesis of Political Distrust Towards the "Sixty-Eighters" in Czech Politics Over the Course of 1989.

This article focuses on the genesis of political distrust against the so-called sixty-eighters—former reform communists—after 1989, outlining in detail the political trajectories of the Prague Spring communist actors. These politicians—the so-called socialist opposition—represented an important part of the Czechoslovak democratic opposition in the 1970s and 1980s. Even though many of the reform communists also stood at the inception of Charter 77, non-communist dissent was politically distrustful of the socialist opposition, centred around the journal Listy. Unlike the "non-political" Charter 77, Czechoslovak socialist opposition has always advocated for a profiled political program of democratic socialism. Thus, this distrust towards the reform communists persisted after 1989. In a situation where Marxism and socialism had completely lost political power and much of society rejected the socialist left as a dangerous remnant of the communist dictatorship, the advocates of post-communist democratic socialism found themselves on the margins of political discourse.

Keywords: Prague Spring, political distrust, reform communism, Czechoslovak dissent, Zdeněk Mlynář, Obroda, post-communism

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Historiographical discussions of roughly the past fifteen years have opened questions regarding the nature of the events of 1989 and the so-called Velvet Revolution, doubting its purely liberal interpretation—one that regards the central political values of 1989 as liberal-democratic. In Czech and Slovak historiographical circles, this debate has taken place primarily around a book by American historian James Krapfl, *Revolution with a Human Face*.[1] Krapfl points out that a key political concept related to the forming of civic society was that of democratic socialism, which is instinctively connected with the year 1968. Though for many involved, the idea of a return to the time of the Prague Spring might have been perceived as hope for a democratic future, if we look at the life stories of the people who are linked with reform communism, the so-called sixty-eighters,[2] it is clear that after 1989, a large portion of them were left

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1 KRAPFL, James. *Revolution with a Human Face: Politics, Culture and Society in Czechoslovakia after 17 November 1989*. Bratislava : Kalligram, 2009; Published in Czech in 2016 as KRAPFL, James. *Revoluce s lidskou tváří. Politika, kultura a společenství v* Československu *v letech 1989-1992*. Prague : Rybka Publishers, 2016.

2 The term "sixty-eighter" is somewhat problematic, because there is no clear definition of who exactly falls into this category and who does not, yet the term is used quite commonly in Czech historiography and journalism, especially as a label for a group of politically active individuals who vigorously supported reform communist efforts in the 1960s, as well as Dubček and the Action Programme during the Prague Spring (many of them took part in its creation). They were a part of the post-war generation, which was united by notably similar, frequently shared life experiences. Born mostly in the mid-1920s, they shared an adolescence strongly marked by the economic crisis, the Munich Agreement and the occupation of Czechoslovakia. These experiences were hugely important in shaping the political attitudes of this generation. The so-called

standing in the wings of political events. Even though many of these people played significant roles in the realization of Charter 77 or otherwise supported dissident activities, public discourse after 1989 did not accept them as credible representatives of the emerging political democracy. In the following text, I will attempt to reveal the historical genesis of political distrust towards the sixty-eighters and its manifestation early in the decade of the 1990s.

The idea of social equality, which lay at the core of the communist project, lost all legitimacy after 1989 and in contrast, the previously "asocial" understanding of the concepts of individual performance, competition or austerity (Klaus's "belt-tightening") acquired a new moral strength. This led to discussion of capitalism in ethical terms and market principles were, with time, even seen as being more socially just. The supporters of market economics did not understand the concept of the market only in fiscal terms nor promote market mechanisms only in the economic field, but also in the development of cultural and social values. One of the most prominent advocates of the market as a fundamental democratic value was philosopher Václav Bělohradský, at that time an apologist for Václav Klaus, who stated that "the market for ideas, the dispute over the meaning of our interests and goals, are also a part of democracy, our aims are reasonable when they can compete in a market of ideas where people criticise everything".[3] Bělohradský rejected any effort to establish a political programme founded on any higher ideas of redemption or truth, as is revealed in the criticism of Marxist intellectuals (e.g. Kosík, Sviták),[4] particularly in the effort to define themselves in relation to the market as a new form of tyranny. He rejected the idea that party dictatorship would be replaced by market dictatorship[5] and on the contrary, accused left-wing intellectuals with an emphasis on politics of echoing the call for strong authority by saying that they "despair of being left without a master".[6] In Bělohradský's opinion, the market was supposed to be liberating from any oppression or power, "the market economy […] was an opportunity for culture to be one of the areas of free private enterprise, and thus to be without a master."[7]

The period of the Prague Spring is generally considered as a few months of unification of Czechoslovak society in the name of democratising reform of the political system and support for Dubček's leadership. Certainly, the feeling of hope that the change in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) leadership brought cannot be doubted, but it is also evident that the narrative of unanimous support for the project of reform communism is a bit more complicated. This was inspired mainly by the attitude of the reform communist establishment towards the spontaneous manifestations of civic activism in 1968. Ivan

"Munich complex" and a distrust towards liberal democracy persisted in these people virtually until the end of their lives, although the political situation around the group changed dramatically over many decades. During the occupation of Czechoslovakia and the Second World War, many of them were part of the anti-Nazi resistance, where they became acquainted with communist ideas for the first time (for example, in the resistance organisation Předvoj). After the war, or after 1948, they enthusiastically joined the Communist Party and supported its policies, sometimes rising to important political and social positions, often very quickly and at a relatively young age. They actively participated in the Stalinisation of Czechoslovak society. The name "reform communists" was given because after the "Thaw" in 1956, they initiated an attempt to de-Stalinise the Communist Party and democratise the regime during the 1960s. In the second half of the decade, or during the spring of 1968, they held important social positions and took part in the democratisation of the communist regime "from above", i.e., through reform of the Communist Party itself. This was best documented by the so-called Action Programme of April 1968.

3 BĚLOHRADSKÝ, Václav. *Kapitalismus a občanské ctnosti*. Praha : Československý spisovatel, 1992.
4 BĚLOHRADSKÝ, Václav. Antiduch na Karlově mostě. In *Literární noviny*, 1992, Vol. 3, No. 44, p. 1.
5 BĚLOHRADSKÝ 1992.
6 BĚLOHRADSKÝ 1992.
7 BĚLOHRADSKÝ, Václav. Trh a duchovní hodnoty. In BĚLOHRADSKÝ 1992, pp. 43–45.

Sviták summed up the conflict symbolically in his famous article *Vaše nynější krize* (*Your Current Crisis*) in April 1968, when Czechoslovak society felt itself to be on the verge of achieving the much-desired socialist democracy. Sviták pointed out the restrictive limits of this "democratic dream" by posing a provocative and fundamental question regarding the reform project: "Do the six million citizens—non-party members—of this country have the same political rights as members of the Communist Party or are they only being given a greater dose of freedom that does not threaten the privileges of party members?"[8] The memory of the Prague Spring attached to the activities of people who later became known as the sixty-eighters is thus not only a memory of "nationwide" support for Dubček's leadership, it also shows scepticism towards the reform communist elites who in a certain moment of civic activism, turned against the independent expressions of social participation:

> From the very beginning of the Prague Spring, it was clear that the political establishment was not inclined towards the emergence of any non-communist opposition. In March 1968, lawyer and politician Zdeněk Mlynář commented on the oft-discussed question of the National Front: [The National Front is] a political platform that does not divide political parties into a "government" and "opposition" in the sense that it would create an opponent pursuing power over the state. On the contrary, it posits the problem of a dispute over the line of state policy, including the issue of potential opposition to the position of one element against another on the grounds of a common agreement and common principles of the socialist conception. We ruled out opposition to this notion of the National Front back in 1945.[9]

Further, the considerably negative position towards the non-communist opposition was not only a theoretical postulate of reform communism, but it was also significantly relevant for party tactics against the possibility of renewing the Social Democratic Party in 1968.[10] Reform communism saw the restoration of social democracy not as a manifestation of society's democratisation and the reinstatement of plurality, but as a failure in the process of merging social democracy with the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ), which was a prerequisite for the functioning of communist society.[11]

The impossibility of political plurality outside the realm of the "socialist consensus" was a relatively clear political boundary that reform communism never questioned. This was a distinctive feature that began to emerge abruptly, especially in May 1968 after the de facto removal of censorship when critical views on the approach of the Communist Party and the Action Programme proliferated in the press. A defence mechanism of the reform communists produced a series of warnings against "anti-socialist and anti-communist forces" in society, which disrupted the otherwise unified reform process. For example, on 14 May 1968, the leading Czechoslovak macroeconomic analyst, Zdislav Šulc, wrote in *Rudé právo* (*Red Justice*) of the danger posed by anti-socialist elements and the need for national unity

8 SVITÁK, Ivan. Vaše nynější krize. In *Student*, 1968, Vol. 4, No. 18, p. 1.
9 MLYNÁŘ, Zdeněk. Co dál s naší demokracií? In *Rudé právo*, 26 March 1968, p. 3.
10 PECKA, Jindřich – BELDA, Josef – HOPPE, Jiří. *Prameny k dějinám* československé *krize v letech 1967–1970, 2. díl, 2. svazek: Sociální organismy a hnutí Pražského jara*. Prague; Brno : ÚSD; Doplněk, 1998, pp. 66–72.
11 A document for internal use of the party, "Report on the State of Renewal of the Social-Democratic Party and Proposals for Policy Measures", written by Zdeněk Mlynář, Evžen Erban and Bohumil Šimon (their report to the presidency of the Central Committee of the Communist Party) demonstrates the unwillingness of the reform leaders in the Communist Party towards the renewal of any non-communist opposition. The aim of the document was to prepare a process for preventing the establishment of social democracy by legal means. It is evident that the "restoration of the bourgeois party" would go far beyond cautious, conceptual proposals for the existence of another party.

of all "progressive forces in Czechoslovakia".[12] In presenting the activities of the ideological department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, chairman Jan Kozel described the situation in Czechoslovakia as a "boiling ideological-political cauldron".[13] Although Kozel appealed to the both communists and non-communists in an effort to participate in political development together, at the same time he pointed out the diversity and contradiction of ideas that were surfacing in the public[14] and emphasised that it was impossible to close one's eyes even to the fact that, along with seeking a way and formulating ideas on a socialist basis, anti-socialist and anti-communist "glorifications of bourgeois democracy" are appearing.[15]

The Formation of Reform Communist Opposition and the Magazine *Listy*

The theory and practice of reform communism was an inseparable part of the Prague Spring and was certainly its driving force at the start. Over time, however, the reform communists became more and more opposed to a spontaneous social movement that did not respect the party boundaries of public demonstrations and therefore came into conflict with the reformist vision of politics. Through the course of the Prague Spring, political positions were gradually emancipated, meaning the reform communist programme was unable to solve basic systemic deficiencies.

This exclusive stance towards non-communist political thinking and activities that were not controlled by the party was fully communicated after the August invasion with the first attempts to "normalise" social conditions and limit proceedings that did not derive their authority from the Action Programme and the Party. Distrust of the reform communist establishment arose from the fact that after the removal of the sixty-eighters from public functions, they made only minimal efforts to support non-socialist or independent opposition yet continued to work in the relatively exclusive concept of "party" opposition. This can be observed from the political negotiations at the beginning of 1970s, during establishment of the magazine *Listy* (*Letters*), the most important media outlet of the so-called socialist opposition.

A "narrower organism", the so-called *Listy* group, was made senior to the editorial committee of *Listy*. It was an informal grouping, however, the members were at first leaders of the Communist Party who went into exile after the Soviet invasion (originally five functionaries who were co-opted into the party's Central Committee at the Congress of Vysočany one day after the Warsaw Pact Invasion—aside from Jiří Pelikán, they were Zdeněk Hejzlar, Ota Šik, Eduard Goldstücker and Jiří Pokštefl).[16] It was in this close circle of intellectuals that the first dispute about the nature of opposition activities arose, following correspondence between Jiří Pelikán and Ota Šik. Immediately at the start of discussions on the direction of *Listy*, Šik expressed his disagreement with the mere confirmation of the validity of the Prague Spring without any more principled self-criticism or theoretical distancing from Marxism-Leninism. At the end of 1970, he wrote that in the future:

12 ŠULC, Zdislav. Komunisté a ti druzí. In *Rudé právo*, 15 May 1968, p. 2.
13 KOZEL, Jan. O aktuálních otázkách současné ideově politické práce. In *Rudé právo*, 16 May 1968, p. 3.
14 KOZEL 1968, p. 3.
15 KOZEL 1968, p. 3.
16 CACCAMO, Francesco. *Jiří Pelikán a jeho cesta socialismem 20. století* . Brno : Doplněk, 2008, p. 41.

> I will restrain from any political activity that could, in the non-communist members of our nations, cause doubts about our negative attitude towards the very basic principles on which the communist movement still stands, i.e. on the dictatorship of the proletariat, the leading role of the Communist Party, the rejection of pluralist democracy, the nationalisation of all means of production, the state directive planning of the economy, the rejection of the market under socialism, the denying of corporate self-government […] etc.[17]

Šik appealed for a new opposition strategy to include not only reform communists, but also representatives of other political forces in exile that had been organised during the Prague Spring such as the Social Democratic Party, the Club of Committed Non-Party Members (KAN) or Klub 231 (K231).

This stance, however, provoked considerable objection from *Listy's* leadership. Zdeněk Hejzlar, former director of Czechoslovak Radio, labelled Šik's concept "misguided" and stated that the Social Democrats, KAN and K231 were not "trustworthy partners" for the *Listy* group and that some of their representatives in exile "took positions incompatible with the communist ideology". In agreement with the other leaders of *Listy*, Hejzlar believed that the most effective political strategy for how to "strike" Brezhnev and deny the right of Husák's new leadership to pass themselves off as the only spokesperson for the Communist Party was to act not as a politically murky civic opposition, but as a thoroughly communist platform:

> Our output must be […] only and only the party and speak on behalf of the silenced delegates of the actual 14th [Vysočany] Congress and speak only the language of the resurgent party as it was formed before this Congress.[18]

In this sense, the reform communists also spoke about the so-called party of the excluded, and in this regard, clearly considered themselves to be legitimate representatives and therefore should enjoy the respect of a large part of Czechoslovak society. Although this "party of the excluded" was meant to represent an opposition, it was not an independent opposition made up of different channels of thought but organised and conscious former party members. It was supposed to be about "hundreds of thousands of relatively young people with great political experience and awareness of the alternative socialist programme, raised within the party and the system and therefore easily orientated, with innumerable and imperceptible relationships with those who remained in the party and system".[19]

The result of the debate within *Listy* on the nature of their opposition was at first the homogeneity of the group, where the idea of ideological continuity prevailed, with the project of reform communism and with the party strategy of political struggle. As such, reform communism was unable to relinquish its ties with party structures. The theoretical basis

17 Šik to Pelikán from the end of 1970 (undated). Cited according CACCAMO 2008, p. 42.
18 Hejzlar to Pelikán, 2 March 1971. Cited according CACCAMO 2008, p. 42.
19 Šik rejected an "exclusive" strategy conceived as such. His views in this dispute did not wane but rather became more radicalised, leading to limited future involvement in the "letters" of socialist opposition. Once again, the principle question of political plurality and its limits, the question of non-party participation in political life, returned to reformist communist thinking and did so in the limited space of the anti-normalisation opposition. Before his departure from the *Listy* group, Šik even wrote, "The people have the right not only to choose a 'form of socialism', but also a social form in general! Perhaps after all the terrible experiences they may not want socialism after all—I hope not and that the forces for democratic socialism will be greater. However, today we do not have the right to decide this debate in advance." Šik's position was not made public in the end "for strategic reasons"—so that the socialist opposition would not expose internal resentment, which would jeopardise the effort to act as "heirs of the sixty-eighters"—and his cooperation with *Listy* began to decline. See CACCAMO, 2008, p.44.

of reform communism lay in the macro-political belief of the "old left", namely that in order for political change to be successful, it must happen at the systemic level—under the control of state and party institutions through which political acts are to be pursued.[20] In this respect, the categories of "independent thinking" or "parallel structures" for reform communism were difficult to integrate, as was equally the idea of a micro-political opposition struggle, which proceeded independently of the state or even as an individual protest against society (most famously articulated by Vaclav Havel in his *Power of the Powerless*). For reform communism, the question of power did not lie in the potential subversion or disruption of hegemony, power was linked with access to political decision-making and control of state and party institutions.

Reform Communists in Relation to Charter 77 and the Non-Communist Opposition

Often the high number of reform communists—so-called ex-communists—active in the early days of Charter 77 is emphasised, yet from the standpoint of their original interest in mobilising tens of thousands of expelled communists, the over one-hundred signatures were actually more a sign of the lethargy of those who demonstrated their activism as party members in 1968. The legacy of reform communist thought in Charter 77 resonated in different forms, above all thanks to leading political thinkers—Zděněk Mlynář and Jiří Hájek—who stood by the birth of the Charter 77 initiative itself. Although, in their eyes, it brought a new concept of the criticism of power, they certainly also saw it as an activity that embodied continuity both with 1968 and the activities of the socialist opposition in the first half of the 1970s. In this regard, leading reform communists in the opposition rightly perceived the Charter as a not wholly innovative document. Mlynář pointed out that:

> Everything that was written in Charter 77 has been written and said many times before. Testimonies on discrimination are generally well known both at home and abroad. In fact, it did not much present any new problem. In a specific situation and in a slightly different way it only presented a long-known problem.[21]

No consensus prevailed among the reform communists in the opposition on cooperating with non-communists and departing from the "Prague Spring Line"; the group itself was too diverse to take a unified approach. The ex-communists were divided by several opinion streams, which differed primarily in their relationship to the possibility of political rehabilitation—and perhaps also the reintegration into political structures, but also in their views on the methods of political action in Czechoslovakia. In the context of establishing Charter 77 and regarding the relationships with the non-communist opposition, it is possible to speak about three main—but mutually linked—directions within the reform communist post-August orientation.

The first was defined by hope for reintegration into political power structures. The idea of a certain type of "Kádárization" of Czechoslovakia, according to the Hungarian style, with a partial reform programme of political democratisation reigned here. Čestmír Císař or Oldřich Černík, for example, can be placed among the leading representatives of this

20 BARŠA, Pavel. *Cesty k emancipaci*. Prague : Academia, 2015, p. 187.

21 Mlynář further writes: "So if on 7 January 1977 (when the text of Charter 77 was published abroad) the government faced only one more of the many previous protests by discriminated citizens, today it has an altered domestic political situation—and not in favour of its own, longer-term intentions and needs. But it has certainly caused this itself." MLYNÁŘ, Zdeněk. První bilance Charty 77. In *Listy*, 1977, Vol. 7, No. 2, p. 3.

direction and for the most part, it was characterised by a critical or distant position regarding Charter 77 and the non-communist opposition.[22] With respect to abandoning Leninist positions and the liberal "conversion" of some former party members, Císař spoke about the "tragedy of Czechoslovak progressivism" and labelled former reform communists who questioned the development of Soviet socialism "apostates".[23] When Mlynář's publication *Mráz přichází* z *Kremlu* (*Nightfrost in Prague: The End of Humane Socialism*) was later published, some passages sparked a critical discussion within this reform communist channel. One of the most critical reactions came from Čestmír Císař, describing the book as "a document convicting its author of full personal and social surrender to the difficulties of world socialism".[24] In his opinion, Mlynář is no longer concerned with "the development of the Soviet establishment by means of reforms towards truly prosperous socialism",[25] but is making a "cross" over the Soviet establishment and "has no choice in his next book but to go over to the platform shared by the anti-communists".[26]

The second line of opinion regarding Charter 77 was comprised of people who believed that the views of reform communism and the legacy of the Action Programme from 1968 should be the ideological foundation for unity of an opposition movement in Czechoslovakia, and that retreating from their positions may mean the future fragmentation of the socialist structures of society acquired in the past. Alexander Dubček, who throughout the period of normalisation maintained a certain distance from the non-socialist opposition but was not entirely politically passive, can be characterised as being a typical representative of this direction. He shared the legalist position with the Charter opposition, which he himself supported in critical letters sent to the highest authorities of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. This is particularly evident in a letter to the Federal Assembly of 28 October 1974 in which Dubček pointed out, above all, the violation of socialist legality, using the example of the systematic restriction of his own personal freedom. However, he also subscribed to the principles of post-January 1968 party policy and especially to the importance of revising Leninist principles, which he still considered to be the starting point and valid for criticism of the ruling party, as was the case in the 1960s. In this letter, among other matters, he stated that:

> With the benefit of hindsight, I must reject statements of all kinds and the conclusions of the current party leadership on the revision of Leninism in the principles of party construction. The post-January party leadership highlighted in both theory and practice the Leninist principle of intra-party democracy, without the application of which there can be no talk of a new type of party. This fundamental principle of life

22 The pursuits of (former) reform communists who were stripped of membership in the Communist Party and high political functions but, of course, remained active "in the margins" of society—often within official institutions—is practically not described. This is a group of people who were not involved in the opposition or dissent and believed that they would experience political change that would allow them to re-engage in higher party functions. The majority of them were individuals who looked very warily at the non-communist dissent and independent civic initiatives because it was that emergence, in the eyes of these people, that had thwarted the reform policy of the 1960s. Here, it would be interesting to map out the destinies of some ministers of Černík's government, such as Bohumil Sucharda, František Řehák or Václav Valeš or František Vlasák.

23 Czech national Archives (NA), Čestmír Císař, PhDr., box 7, strojopis Císařovy statě Veletoče Z. Mlynáře, p. 4.

24 NA, Čestmír Císař, PhDr., box 7, strojopis Císařovy statě Veletoče Z. Mlynáře, p. 4.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

> and the party's creative approach to fulfilling its mission was before and is still today being repressed.[27]

In this respect, Dubček, even during the normalisation period, stood consistently on the principles of Leninism; he refused to understand Marxism-Leninism as "a blind dogma, a textbook and primer that prescribes the same recipe and procedure for all communist parties regardless of where they occur".[28]

In relation to the political developments of 1968, this was the correct way for Dubček from the viewpoint of the party's intentions at that time, but like the above-mentioned first stream of reform communists, he believed that the spontaneous social expression of independent activities was the cause of the political crisis and exceeded the boundaries of reform communism. In his letter, he also highlighted the importance of the November resolution of the Communist Party Central Committee of 1968, which arose only as a consequence of military occupation. The essence of the proposed resolution was to be "reform without extremes" while the seeds of opposition political forces (Social Democracy, Club of Committed Non-Party Members, K 231) and the free media were considered to be "extremes".[29] Dubček characterised this line of the Communist Party as "a synthesis of the positive features of post-January policy with the content and complete and sincere fulfilment of obligations following the Bratislava Declaration and the Moscow Protocol".[30] In a letter to the Federal Assembly, he also stated that this "retreat from extremes" was "closest to the possibility of political unification of the vast majority of the party and society, and made it possible to lead the party out of a new crisis".[31]

Here, it is understandable that Dubček could not and did not want to exceed the boundaries of the Leninist principle of opposition and take part in independent civic initiatives. Although he reportedly supported Charter 77 privately,[32] available literature agrees that he did not identify with its "non-socialist" foundations.[33] He certainly must have been closer to some of the outcast reform communists who remained "within structures" than, for example, to Mlynář or Havel. With some of the protagonists of the first group—Čestmír Císař, for example—he thus represented the group of so-called waiting opposition.

A similar opposition "line" was taken at first by the editors of *Listy,* however, during the first half of the 1970s, opinions on cooperation with non-communists began to differ there as well. This ideological dispute culminated in a period of discussions on their approach towards Charter 77 and a possible connection with the non-socialist opposition at home and in exile. While the boldest from the ranks of reformist com-

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27 Letter of A. Dubček. In *Listy*, 1975, Vol. 5, No. 3, p. 10.
28 Among other things, Dubček wrote that "Marxism-Leninism represented a guide to the activities of a communist party when it has its universally valid principles. I mention this because it is difficult for me to be thrown into one bag with the sold-out traitors of the party because, like many others, I looked differently than today's party leadership at the application of party policy at a given stage of development and the method of resolving difficulties and overcoming obstacles in the party and in society." Letter of A. Dubček. In *Listy*, 1975, Vol. 5, No. 3, p. 10.
29 HOPPE, Jiří. Listopadové plénum ÚV KSČ. In *Akademický bulletin Akademie věd* České *republiky*, 2008, Vol. 16, No. 11, p. 3.
30 Letter of A. Dubček. In *Listy*, 1975, Vol. 5, No. 3, p. 10.
31 Ibid, p. 9.
32 A. Dubček a Charta 77. In *Listy*, 1977, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 16–17.
33 BENČÍK, Antonín. *Téma: Alexander Dubček.* Praha : XYZ, 2012, p. 132.

munists, the "domestic" opposition activists Zdeněk Mlynář and Jiří Hájek—thanks to their commitment to the founding of Charter 77 and personal friendships with many non-communist dissidents—were clearly inclined towards political dialogue and openness, voices were also heard clamouring to hold the political line of the Communist Party of 1968. The most prominent in the argument against Mlynář was Zdeněk Hejzlar, who demanded that the activities of the socialist opposition around *Listy* focus, above all, on developing a new reform programme within the communist system, otherwise there would be a "catastrophic disintegration of structures".[34]

Like in the case of Dubček, this discussion revealed a contradiction in the view of the Prague Spring among the reform communists inside the *Listy* editorial circle. While the position inclined towards dialogue with non-communists saw the main benefit of 1968 as linking pressure from the reform part of the party with the forming activism in civil society (i.e. a combination of "top" and "bottom" pressures, as these processes were commonly discussed), advocates of a more cautious approach to reform saw the spontaneous civic manifestations as crossing the boundaries of communist reformism. These discussions often remained internal, and antagonism towards the non-communist opposition during the course of 1968 was never publicly articulated "aggressively", possibly because such a critique of the Prague Spring could have resembled official Normalisation propaganda from the *Poučení z krizového vývoje* (Lessons Drawn from the Crisis Development). In personal arguments, of course, the dispute over cooperation with non-communists remained one of the main topics of the political opposition's strategy.[35]

The third faction among politically active reform communists was formed by those who gradually focused on strengthening democratic pressure "from below" to revive the "civic tendencies" of 1968. In the new socio-political situation of the second half of the 1970s, these people no longer expected that the main ideological current would further operate continuously within the ideology of the reform communism of the 1960s.[36] Therefore when Charter 77 emerged, this direction did not consider a return

34 CACCAMO 2008, p. 58.

35 In September 1977, Zdeněk Hejzlar wrote to Mlynář saying that "in 9 years in the West, I have not found any reason why, out of bitterness over the squalor of 'socialism' of Soviet origin, I should run to the camp of capitalists". Hejzlar refused to be part of the "independent opposition", whose basic orientation would not be on the principles of democratic socialism and wanted to continue in the long ideological tradition of attempts to democratise communism, which in his opinion, had been strongly rooted in the Czechoslovak communist movement since the early 1920s "Šmeral" times. Hejzlar saw the reform communist political tendencies as being irreplaceable in the process of opening a path to change in the states of Eastern Europe, because—the same as in the 1960s—they were not aimed at destruction of the existing socio-political and international system. That's why for him, the solution was not to abandon the communist programme in the name of a "general" democratisation of society, but to try again and again to formulate new socialist starting points from the positions of Marxism-Leninism. In the letter to Mlynář, he also stated that he could find "no better tool than his strongly revisionist Marxism, so that I could, in some acceptable way, analyse and explain both the Eastern and Western misery and disarray." At this time, a large portion of the ex-communists were already abandoning the idea of opposition politics as, above all, a communist (or party) policy in the spirit of the reformism of the 1960s. Reform communism was understood more as a potential source of inspiration than as the only valid position. In the circle of the *Listy* group, Hejzlar was the most systematic critic of the retreat from communist tactics. On the tenth anniversary of the Prague Spring, he wrote in the German magazine *L76* that the opening of the "process of change" in Eastern Europe may be "done in the future only by the hands of the Communists themselves. Only opposition from within their ranks can first cross the line of protest and criticism, and set the system in motion." See HEJZLAR, Zdeněk. Reformní komunismus nepatří minulosti. In *Listy*, 1978, Vol. 8, Special Issue 1968–1978 in Retrospect, p. 38; Originally the article was published in a more comprehensive state in *L76* and entitled "Je reformní komunismus ve Východní Evropě překonán?".

36 NA, Zdeněk Mlynář, box 4, Strojopis Mlynářovy studie O politických zkušenostech levicových intelektuálů v Československu. Příspěvek v diskuzi na téma: Intelektuálové a politika v Kolíně, 17 September 1977.

to party structures as a realistic political goal, though this changed for some at the end of the 1980s during the perestroika period. Members of this third group were the active signatories of Charter 77. In their non-Chartist activities, they were still actively taking part in the international communist or socialist movement and were trying to "apply the socialist viewpoint within the Czechoslovak opposition movement, which is emerging 'from below' as pressure from non-communist political forces in the regime, attempting for democratisation".[37] This current rejected the ongoing practice of normalising the Communist Party, though it clearly spoke in favour of maintaining the socialist system in Czechoslovakia. It is only this group that historians and period documents refer to as "ex-communists in the Charter".[38]

The ex-communists in the Charter spoke about a "synthesis of diverse experiences from practice in the existing system", and especially at the beginning saw in the Chartist critique "a continuation of democratisation and humanisation efforts in a renewal of the process of 68". The political experience of the ex-communists of the 1960s, which "no one else has in the way of life experience and cannot have" was to play an important role here.[39] Miroslav Kusý, another representative of the third way, described the continuity with the renewal process in the sense of "an effort to ensure the legal and human security of the civic and human existence of every person in this republic".[40] Reform communists who decided to cooperate with the non-communist opposition joined the common opposition platform with a sense of continuity with the year 1968. They viewed it primarily in the efforts to "constitute a legal consolidated civil and civilised human society", exactly the premise on which it was newly constituted in the nascent Chartist dialogue.

It is necessary to point out that the reform communists remained discredited in the eyes of some of the exile and domestic opposition because of their past involvement. As a result, discussions on their credibility were under way. Petr Placák gave a detailed description of a dialogue between ex-communists and Christian activists on the grounds of the lay organisation Opus Bonum. However, Placák also describes the strong criticism that prevailed in exile against the reform communists, primarily from

37 NA, Zdeněk Mlynář, box 4, Strojopis přednášky (uvedeno pouze "pro sborník v Madridu") Deset let po "pražském jaru" v Československu, pp. 15–16, June 1978.

38 In regard to the definition of the term "ex-communist" See OTÁHAL, Milan. *Opoziční proudy v české společnosti*. Praha : Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, 2021, pp. 24-39; Among the important period contributions of the dissident discussion on the participation of ex-communists in the Charter see also MLYNÁŘ, Zdeněk. Exkomunisté a křesťané. In *Studie*, 1978, No. 60, pp. 414–428; MEDEK, Ivan: Křesťané a exkomunisté nejen v Chartě 77. In *Studie*, 1979, No. 62, pp. 147–149; ZVĚŘINA, Josef: Nežít v nenávisti (Přátelům i nepřátelům). In *Listy*, 1980, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 43–46; Probably the most detailed contribution on the clarification and definition of the term "ex-communists" and on the reflection of their participation in Charter 77 was the thoughts of Miroslav Kusý in May 1982: "Ex-communists and the Charter" published in *Listy* magazine. Kusý understood the activities of the ex-communists as a logical consequence of the "humanisation efforts of 1968". He wrote: "That core of ex-communists who declare themselves to be the legitimate heirs to the renewal process of 68 therefore had to, of course, and with the deepest inner conviction, be incorporated into the Charter 77 civic initiative movement. The effort to constitute a legally consolidated civil and civilised human society in our country and an effort to ensure the legal and human security of the civic and human existence of every person in this republic naturally connects them with the Charter. It should not be a full-fledged homeland only for the communists, only for the privileged, but for everyone who was born here, who lives here and has resolved to continue living here. Participation in Charter 77 logically fully follows for these ex-communists from their basic democratisation and humanisation efforts in the revival process of 68. It is a continuation of it at today's level using today's means." KUSÝ, Miroslav. Exkomunisti a Charta. In *Listy*, 1982, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 31–36.

39 MLYNÁŘ, Zdeněk. Charta 77 po dvou letech (druhá část). In *Listy*, 1979, Vol. 9, No. 2, p. 9.

40 KUSÝ 1982, p. 35.

the post-February 1948 Christian-oriented exile. He notes here, among other things, a statement by journalist and editor of Radio Free Europe, Jaroslav Dresler, who rejected the idea of developing an exile dialogue with ex-communists who were, in his words, "disqualified" from working in a democratic society:

> I believe that dialogue with some former leaders of the Czechoslovak communists is, at the very least, reckless. These people—not collectively, of course, but each individually—committed an offence against democracy and especially, violated the Czechoslovak constitution and its laws, including the so-called socialist legality. Jiří Pelikán and Zdeněk Hejzlar had a share in the purges at universities and negatively affected the lives of ten thousand young people. Zdeněk Mlynář was still defending communist censorship in the spring of 1968 and signed the Moscow Protocol. A.J. Liehm was a reporter in the Slánský trial. Pavel Kohout was one of the main proponents of Stalinism in literature.[41]

Obroda (Renewal): An Attempt to Rehabilitate Reform Communism in the Perestroika Period

At the end of the 1980s, reformist communist opinions could no longer be ascribed to all former reform communists, and certainly not to all who joined the newly formed movement Obroda: Klub za socialistickú prestavbu (Renewal: The Club for Socialist Restructuring), which consciously represented reform communism and the legacy of the Prague Spring following the reform ideas of the 1960s. Of course, even in the environment of Obroda, at the end of the 1980s, there was a clear trend towards views of a rather social democratic type, embodied at that time by Western Socialist International.[42] The circle of people who went on to form Obroda began to take shape in 1987 as a reaction to the muted response to perestroika in Czechoslovak politics. It was made up of almost exclusively former reform communists and functionaries from the Prague Spring; merely a certain segment of those who had maintained contact with one another throughout Normalisation. The most prominent representatives among them were, for example, Miloš Hájek, Vojtěch Mencl, Václav Kural and Josef Domaňský. In its February 1989 programme statement, Obroda supported democratic socialism, Gorbachev's perestroika and Euro-communism:

> We want, in our efforts, not only to take up the legacy of the past and the ideas of our democratic socialist renewal process of 1968 and today's reconstruction in the Soviet Union, but also the experience and successes attained on behalf of the people by socialist, democratic and some communist parties in the western part of our continent.[43]

The strategy of the former reform communists was mainly to appeal to Communist Party leadership in the area of democratising society. Aside from Gorbachev's perestroika, Obroda directly avowed the legacy of the 1968 reform programme, which in their opinion, corresponded to socialism based on the principles of humanity and

41 PLACÁK, Petr. Lidská práva aneb Člověčenství. Charta 77 na půdě exilové organizace Opus bonum. In *Paměť a dějiny*, 2016, No. 4 , p. 34.
42 TUMA, Oldřich. Historický úvod. In KOKOŠKOVÁ, Zdeňka - KOKOŠKA, Stanislav. *OBRODA: Klub za socialistickou přestavbu. Dokumenty*. Prague : Maxdorf, 1996, pp. 9–14.
43 Prohlášení přípravného výboru Klubu za socialistickou přestavbu OBRODA (2/1989). In KOKOŠKOVÁ – KOKOŠKA 1996, pp. 45–51.

democracy and attempted to "remove the bureaucratic system directing the society uncontrollably".[44]

Obroda saw itself as a movement that would try to engage in a dialogue with all emerging civic initiatives and informal groupings, but also with members of "all" political parties[45], presenting itself as a "constructive opposition".[46] The position of Obroda in the first half of 1989 is relatively ambiguous. Jiří Suk described the approach as "oscillating between loyalty and activism".[47] Obroda expressed a willingness to cooperate with both new independent initiatives as well as the Communist Party. In the *Statement of the Preparatory Committee of the Club Obroda*, the club announced that it was prepared for dialogue with representatives of the Communist Party, in which it saw "a glimpse and the beginning of a broad dialogue between official institutions and all independent groups".[48] However, the statement also commented on cooperation with emerging independent political movements, which it labelled as partners "with a significant share in the creation of public opinion and the new, coming, popular state policy".[49]

Although Obroda demonstrated a willingness to cooperate across the emerging political spectrum, in the *Statement of the Preparatory Committee*, the organisation clearly defined itself against the rehabilitation of liberal-democratic principles:

> We reject the efforts of defeatists to write off socialism in the name of new liberalism, a "pure" democracy, "absolute" freedom and the like, which have no chance in real life and wander in the realms of fantasy. It is impossible to solve the crisis of Stalinism with the liquidation of socialist ideology, but with the liquidation of false ideology and its replacement by socialist humanism.[50]

According to one Obroda member, Luboš Kohout, the political pluralism that Obroda proclaimed in its statements represented the "position of socialist, social-democratic and some communist parties".[51] Such an approach contravened the liberal conception of Western European political plurality as a competition between independent political entities. In the end, Kohout himself wrote that Obroda does not suffer from "frequent illusions about the perfection of democracy as developed in Western or Northern Europe or North America".[52]

The rejection of Western-style liberal democracy—an "outdated" model of democracy for the reform communists—was also associated with critical attitudes towards some independent civic initiatives. Their demands, which openly postulated the transition to a party pluralistic system, were perceived in the eyes of Obroda members as inadequate in the context of the political situation at the time. Historian and Chartist Milan Hübl expressed scepticism regarding programmes and statements that relied on the rapid removal of the Communist Party, or its leadership role. He perceived non-communist

44 KOKOŠKOVÁ – KOKOŠKA 1996, pp. 45–51.
45 Ibid, p. 116.
46 TŮMA 1996, pp. 9–14.
47 SUK, Jiří. Zlom mezi "totalitou" a "demokracií". Československý rok 1989 v alternativách. In *Soudobé dějiny*, 2009, Vol. 16, No. 4, p. 584.
48 SUK 2009, p. 584.
49 Archive of ČSSD (AČSSD) Obroda, box 3, Sdělení přípravného výboru klubu Obroda, p. 3, 5 April 1989.
50 AČSSD, Obroda, box 3, Sdělení přípravného výboru klubu Obroda, p. 3, 5 April 1989.
51 KOHOUT, Luboš. Prohlášení Obrody a její kritikové. In *Ze zásuvky a bloku*, 1989, Vol. 6, No. 21, p. 58.
52 KOHOUT 1989, p. 58.

manifestos as unrealistic and advocated that the opposition unite on a platform advancing the principles of a Czechoslovak perestroika, an approach prevalent in the Obroda Club:

> Thus far, no one has stepped before the local public with a realistic programme of gradual transformation which would, in spite of the rigidity of power and its structures, present a viable path. […] Although, as we mainly hope, the course linked with Gorbachev's name will prevail, it will not be easy to activate it in our country. The irreplaceability of Dubček and those around him will again be shown, because only they can build bridges to Gorbachev and positively influence the refining the opinions within power structures.[53]

In a release from April 1989, *Why Obroda Was Founded*, Miloš Hájek argued for a similar direction. He cautiously defined himself against the Hnutí za občanskou svobodu (The Movement for Civil Liberties), which was associated with both socialists and non-socialists. Hájek saw this as a possible weak point for the development of more precise political positions. In his opinion, the aim at the given moment should be mainly a "solid and formed socialist opposition",[54] which would rehabilitate the original ideals of socialism in the eyes of Czechoslovak citizens. Such opposition was to prevent the democratisation process from "taking on an explosive nature", which in the language of the reformist communists meant, above all, the collapse of socialist political structures.

The programmes and declarations of Obroda in the spring of 1989 demonstrate a certain conceptual confusion, likely based on a murky understanding regarding the leading role of the Communist Party and the Communist Party in general. Certainly, differing opinions of members were expressed on the degree of cooperation with the Communist Party, its role in the democratisation process as well as possible constitutional changes. In further theses, Obroda sketched out a constitutional framework in which it "mixed all the main types of democratic representation—plebiscite, parliamentary and presidential—without making it clear how they might work together".[55] They spoke ambiguously about the National Front, on one hand referring to democratic principles that exclude any monopoly and permit all political associations to seek the trust of citizens, and in the same report, speaking about the systems of the National Front, which can play a positive role in the process of preserving democracy. The National Front was understood as a "democratic and socialist partnership cooperation of independent political entities, i.e. parties and interested organisations".[56] The political arrangement in which Obroda likely saw the most realistic way of fulfilling its demands was the post-war system of so-called limited democracy between 1945-1948, which Kohout called a "specific national and democratic path to socialism without the so-called dictatorship of the Soviet-type proletariat".[57] It seems that for the reform communists, the post-war political system of the Czechoslovak Third Republic, critical of liberal political principles, was a boundary they had no intention of crossing historically and in it, they saw a higher stage of historical-political development that transcended liberal (bourgeois)

53 HÜBL, Milan. Záhořovo lože a jak z něj. In *Listy*, 1989, Vol. 19, No. 2, p. 13.
54 HÁJEK, Miloš. Proč vznikla Obroda. In *Listy*, 1989, Vol. 19, No. 4, p. 21.
55 SUK, Jiří. Demokracii pro všechny! Jenže jakou? Parlamentní demokracie v úvahách opozičních skupin na sklonku 80. let (draft of an article to be published in 2021).
56 KOHOUT 1989, p. 57.
57 KOHOUT 1989, p. 57.

democracy. On 3 December 1989, Čestmír Císař declared in the Bergedorf Discussion Club at the Forum Hotel in Prague among other things, "Those who think that our development can return to the situation before 1938 are dreamers. […] So, don't expect a possible return to capitalism in terms of the economy."[58]

Jiří Suk precisely described the main problem associated with the political imagination of Obroda:

> If someone wants political pluralism and the division of power, he is already abandoning socialism as a permanently shared and unchangeable reality, because people can freely choose such social practices and adopt such laws that gradually establish another type of government, such as privatising state-owned enterprises or cooperatives, et cetera.[59]

Obroda thus found itself in the same dilemma as the reform communists in 1968; appealing to political pluralism and the opportunity of the individual to freely decide, and at the same time believing that the socialist establishment would remain preserved—assuming that socialism will automatically be understood as the indisputable foundation of the political system.

As with other independent initiatives, the events of November 1989 represented an important moment for the reform communists as the long-awaited "mass movement" of the people, who can actively participate in the process of democratisation of the socialist system and the associated transformation of the Communist Party, finally materialised. The Analytical Group of Obroda called the mechanism of the spontaneous establishment of civic forums a "revolutionary process, not reform", which is "an expression of the spontaneous will of the people".[60] It appealed to the Občanské forum (Civic Forum, OF) to be open to as many entities as possible that wish to share in the democratic changes, such as representatives of the Revoluční odborové hnutí (Revolutionary Trade Union Movement) or the democratic communists. At the end of November, the leadership of the Communist Party, attempting to salvage its position, invited Obroda, specifically Vojtěch Mencl, Čestmír Císař and Josef Domaňský, to a joint meeting. Obroda thus returned to a schizophrenic position stemming from its efforts to balance between preserving a socialist establishment and the demand for unrestricted democratic free elections. It was part of the Civic Forum, though at the same time acted as an independent political entity with its own interests.

As a result, a considerable amount of distrust began to be felt within the Občanské forum towards Obroda, also because future Prime Minister Marián Čalfa promoted Čestmír Císař to the government during the negotiations with the Občanské forum. As recalled by Petr Pithart, the topic of reform communism was opened within the Občanské forum during this meeting and the majority of members present expressed negative and distrustful opinions because they did not expect such a quickly organised and united group promoting its own political agenda.[61] The credibility of

58 Cited by SUK 2009, p. 585.
59 SUK, Jiří. Demokracii pro všechny! Jenže jakou? Parlamentní demokracie v úvahách opozičních skupin na sklonku 80. let (draft article, to be published in 2021).
60 AČSSD, Obroda, box 3, Strojopis prohlášení O politice 17. 11. KSČ jako moc – občanská společnost jako opozice, 26 November 1989.
61 PITHART, Petr. *Devětaosmdesátý. Vzpomínky a přemýšlení: Krédo*. Praha : Academia, 2009, p. 166.

the so-called sixty-eighters was not helped by the "legendary" television appearance of Zdeněk Mlynář, where he criticised the OF policy, defended the importance of the Communist Party's role in democratic transformation and the communist Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec's 15:5 government (fifteen of the twenty government positions would remain for the Communist Party).[62] Even though Obroda distanced itself in writing from Mlynář's television appearance the next day,[63] the distrust and aversion towards the reform communists rose within the OF. Leading representatives of the Civic Forum who did not have a communist past refused to let those from Obroda into the room during their negotiations considering them to be "traitors".[64] Understandably, the voices of the former reform communists who operated under Charter 77 in the OF expressed doubts about such behaviour. However, it is evident from the recorded transcripts of the OF meetings that these "Chartist ex-communists" (e.g. Zdeněk Jičínský, Miloš Hájek or Rudolf Slánský, Jr.) were perceived very differently than people who were not involved in the Charter during the 1970s and 1980s.[65]

Vigilance can also be rather clearly seen in the records of the OF meetings where Václav Havel clearly rejected cooperation with Obroda and expressed considerable opposition to the movement and the reform communists:

> I think that thanks to Zdeněk Mlynář, Mr. Dubček was also written off from his candidacy for anything. Because of that, Mlynář is the reason we lost, or—not to speak for others—I lost confidence in the reform communists so much that I think that if there are two of them, I'll return to being a dissident and writing plays and having fun with Captain Čermák in his interrogation room and I will have peace of mind.[66]

Havel even refused to negotiate politically with Obroda, which according to him was:

> Worse than the party. Those from Obroda are traitors, while those from the party are partners, that Mohorita. I will talk to Urbánek at any time, but I hang up the phone on Mlynář when he calls me […] And he asked me (Josef Krejčí—secretary of the National Front), 'Do you want Obroda there?' And I said, 'I'm not going anywhere if Obroda is there.' Obroda is, I don't know, five and a half people? It's like a party […] Why should we exclude the Party of Slovak Revival from negotiations? Because it is ridiculous to us. And why should we negotiate with the presence of this Obroda as if it represented someone? And what's more, I personally feel that they are traitors.[67]

62 In his study of Zdeněk Mlynář, Alessandro Catalano presents the memory of the last Secretary General of the Communist Party, Karel Urbánek, "He suddenly appeared in my office, without notice. He came to ask me to order that his son be released from prison. […] After a short exchange of opinions, I made him an offer to appear on television in defence of democracy and I would help with his son. He reacted with great surprise, 'After everything that has happened, you want me to appear on television in defence of the Communists?' 'I really couldn't ask for that, but you can speak out against the media persecution of those who have done nothing wrong except having a different opinion on the social organisation of the state and on the period of building socialism.' 'Mr. Secretary General, you are a businessman, but I would do anything for my son, I will appear on television.' Zdeněk Mlynář appeared on television, amply funded, and his son was released. To my regret, however, it hurt him in the period that followed." CATALANO, Alessandro. Zdeněk Mlynář a hledání socialistické opozice. Od aktivní politiky přes disent k ediční činnosti v exilu. In *Soudobé dějiny*, 2013, Vol. 20, No. 3, p. 281.

63 ACSSD, Obroda, box 3, Stanovisko klubu za socialistickou přestavbu Obroda, 8 December 1989.

64 HÁJEK, Miloš. *Paměť* české *levice*. Praha : Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, 2012, pp. 306–312.

65 HÁJEK 2012.

66 SUK, Jiří. *Občanské fórum: listopad–prosinec 1989. 2. díl. Dokumenty*. Brno : Doplněk, 1998, p. 140.

67 SUK 1998, pp. 139–140.

Thanks to this exclusion, the political careers of some sixty-eighters began to head towards renewed convergence with the post-1989 Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM) and a search for a new political position other than the democratic centre occupied by the Civic Forum. Obroda vainly sought a place of its own within the emerging political spectrum, though it still viewed itself as a club rather than a political party and saw its future more in cooperation with one of the left-wing parties in favour of democratic socialism. It did not initially hamper cooperation with the Communists or above all, with the reform-oriented Democratic Forum of Communists.[68] However, the attitudes of the former sixty-eighters—especially functionaries from the spring of 1968, with which Obroda mostly associated—towards the KSČ and later the KSČM, were relatively complicated, even though before November 1989, the majority of them were inclined (as part of the reconstruction) towards cooperation—or at least dialogue—with the KSČ. However, after the collapse of the communist system, they saw no future in reform communism.

Most of the actors of the Prague Spring had broken away from the normalising communist party under relatively unfavourable circumstances—either they withdrew from the Communist Party as a protest against the occupation, or they were later expelled or expunged. For them, the post-November KSČM thus represented a totally different political entity than the "Prague-spring" Communist Party, ideologically and personally, and in its current form, they did not see it as a party with the potential to fulfil the ideals of democratically oriented socialism in the future. There was practically no room for common discussion here, though individuals tried to incite such talk, for example, within the Levý Blok (Left Bloc, LB) electoral coalition, which for a brief time became the hope for some former reform communists to restore the socialist platform within the Czech left-wing scene.

Its weakness, however, lay in the fact that these were predominately people with a communist past; nearly all of its members and functionaries had been members of the Communist Party at some point in their lives, although Mlynář emphasised that LB members considered the former Communist Party to be undemocratic and refused to support it.[69] The LB failed in its efforts to address a wider audience and failed to gain a more prominent place in the political spectrum. No additional significant political engagement since the 1960s came.

Yet, these post-communist socialists derived from the reform communism of the 1960s (Pelikán, Císař, Hájek, Mlynář, Kosík) left a relatively distinctive imprint in the Czech public discourse of the 1990s. They became early critics of unregulated capitalism and the new politics of memory. Although the sixty-eighters were an internally diverse group affected by years of disputes and conflicts, it was in fact the post-communist

68 HÁJEK, Miloš. Místo Obrody v dnešním politickém spektru. In KOKOŠKOVÁ - KOKOŠKA 1996, pp. 194–195.

69 Zdeněk MLYNÁŘ wrote, "Yes, they do not hide it and they are not ashamed of it, because they split with the anti-democratic ideology and practices of the former KSČ, and did so not only in words, but in deeds. Some of them long ago, around 1968, others—mainly those who were still children during the Prague Spring—not until around 1989. In their programme, however, at the same time they reject the purposeful contempt, simplification or silencing of our history and declare that the collapse of 'real socialism' for them does not mean that they cease supporting humanist and socialist values and goals and seek better alternatives to development than traditional capitalism offers." Quoted from MLYNÁŘ, Zdeněk. Levý blok není KSČM. In MLYNÁŘ, Zdeněk. *Proti srsti*. Praha : Periskop, 1996, p. 188.

politics of memory that brought them back again to the same ship and unified their arguments. The new official version of post-war history resulted in the leading communist representatives of the Prague Spring belonging, according to the law, to the same political category as the normalisation elite (Husák, Biľak or Jakeš), which helped to liquidate any democratic achievements of 1968. No wonder then that it was the sixty-eighters who first called for the need to revise this interpretation.

Conclusion

The story of Zdeněk Mlynář's return to Czechoslovakia is an example of the bitter experience that was typical for many Czechoslovak socialists in the 1990s. Mlynář returned to Czechoslovakia convinced that he would play an important role in the political transition to democracy, mainly due to his knowledge of the internal functions of political institutions. It soon became clear, however, that similarly to many former communist officials of the spring of 1968, Mlynář was not seen as a fully credible political figure. The new political course was set in a very different direction than the one he had sought during the entire period of normalisation. He had no choice but to become an opposition—in this time legal—critic of the new policy and, as he himself declared in 1989, an advocate of the "honest people in the Communist Party", who in his mind "ended up politically in the dock". Mlynář said of this, "I was one of the initiators of Charter 77 in 1977 because I shared the opinion that every accused needs an advocate. Without one, there can be no objective assessment of guilt. Without that, there can be no rule of law."[70] Thus, even after November 1989, Mlynář took the position of a "legalist critic" and became a vocal opponent of the new memory and history laws (mainly the Lustration Act and Act on Illegality of the Communist Regime and on Resistance Against It).

The end of Mlynář's career was marked by a controversial political indictment, in which he was accused of treason for organising the procession of tanks into Czechoslovakia in 1968 and his complicity in the founding of the pro-Soviet "workers' and peasants' government". Mlynář thus transformed from an advocate of the rule of law into an actor in the political process. Even though the charges were dropped due to expiration of the twenty-year statute of limitations, Mlynář was crushed by the accusations. Thus, to a certain extent Mlynář's political failure in the first half of the 1990s and his subsequent death in 1997 symbolised—at least temporarily—the fate of Czech socialist politics in this period.

In this text, I have shown the historical genesis of political distrust of the so-called sixty-eighters—communist officials from the Prague Spring. Though a large portion of the group actively took part in the democratic opposition or went into exile, after 1989, society still largely perceived them as (reform) communists and efforts to renew cooperation with the KSČM certainly did not add to any political trust from the right-wing and liberal media. Their political failure, however, also needs to be seen in the broader context of ideological development after 1989. To defend the idea of socialism anywhere in Central Europe in the 1990s meant choosing a certain type of political isolation. The failure of socialism in Central Europe after 1989 was not, understandably,

70 MLYNÁŘ, Zdeněk. Tak takhle tedy také ne! In *Rudé právo,* 14 December 1989, p. 1.

due only to social distrust and the weakness of political programmes. The effort to formulate a left-wing critique of post-1989 liberal democracy was not a type of criticism that would become generally accepted in the 1990s, namely because of the party history of those who spoke it. In a time carried away by the "triumph of liberalism", many influential intellectuals declared the "death of socialism" and even more warned of the danger of any "third way".[71] In a situation where Marxism and socialism had completely lost all political power, the concept of (democratic) socialism ended up in the fringes of public political vocabulary, with a great part of society rejecting the idea of the socialist left as a dangerous remnant of the communist dictatorship.

71 For example: DAHRENDORF, Ralf. The Strange Death of Socialism. In *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 1990, Vol. 79, No. 313, pp. 7–17; FUKUYAMA, Francis: The End of History? In *The National Interest*, 1989, Winter 1989/1990, No. 16, pp. 3–18.

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FORUM HISTORIAE

Trust in the Church Hierarchy among the Underground Church Community in Post-1968 Slovakia

Agáta Šústová Drelová

Abstract

ŠÚSTOVÁ DRELOVÁ, Agáta. Trust in the Church Hierarchy among the Underground Church Community in Post-1968 Slovakia

In the post-1968 era, trust in the official hierarchy among the catholic faithful was far from guaranteed. With the church hierarchy under tight state control and effectively existing on two levels—officially and "underground"—the levels of trust fluctuated and its character changed. Trust was constructed, challenged and negotiated. Drawing on an analysis of the catholic discourse in late socialism, I argue that the character and level of trust in the local catholic hierarchy changed dynamically according to the current hierarchy's relationship to the communist party-state, the hierarchy's relationship with the Vatican and the level and quality of the hierarchy´s relationship with the underground community itself.

Keywords: trust, Czechoslovakia, underground church, hierarchy, late socialism

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František Mikloško, one of the leading members of the underground community of (Roman) Catholic activists—the Underground Church—recently defined the arrangement as "encompassing everything from the life of the Church which was forbidden under the threat of persecution by the state."[1] Defining the underground Church specifically in relation to the official Church was no new exercise for Mikloško. Ever since the advent of the underground community in the late 1940s—by-and-large in reaction to the significant and harsh curtailment of religious life by the party-state ruled by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and its Church law churches—the underground Church found itself in a precarious position; constantly challenged by both official authorities and the official church which, for the most part, sought to follow the state rulings. (Self)defining was a way of coping with this situation, both institutionally and mentally. What most resulting definitions shared was an emphasis on the underground community's unity with the hierarchy, both at its national and supranational levels. This was in part a reaction to two reoccurring challenges to the status and definition of the Underground Church: first, pre-1989, systematic denigration by the repressive apparatus intended to (out)cast these activists as not belonging to the church proper and, second, to post-1989 uncertainty about the community's

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1 VYBÍRALOVÁ, Eva. Tajná církev v Československu byla prorockým hlasem, Rozhovor s Františkem Mikloškem o skrýte církvi. In *Paměť a dějiny*, 2020, Vol. 14, No. 4, p. 72. https://www.ustrcr.cz/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/PD_4_20_s72-85.pdf

standing in relation to the present-day current hierarchy.[2] This study dives deeper into these processes of self-definition as it developed during the late socialist period leading up to 1989, focusing in particular on the construction and dynamics of trust vis-a-vis the Church hierarchy, especially the Bishops and Ordinaries.

What role did trust play for the underground Church members? The above, self-definition implies trust in the hierarchy to be central, and at the same time, stable and given. However, such assumptions overshadow the tensions and distrust that were part-and-parcel of the relationship with the hierarchy. Indeed, as is maintained throughout this study, a distinction must be made between the underground church's vision and its everyday reality, between assuming and implying trust and its everyday construction, or better—reconstruction. This article seeks to shed light on the development of the relationship between underground Church members and the official hierarchy, including those members of the Church who were part of the priest association Združenie katolíckych duchovných Pacem in terris (The Association of Catholic Clergy Pacem in Terris, ZKD-PIT), which was loyal to the regime and whose members typically worked as regime aides within the Church.

I argue that the construction of trust was a dynamic process relative to the hierarchy's present relationship to the Communist party-state and its right-hand in the church, the ZKD-PIT,[3] dependent on the hierarchy's relationship to the Vatican and, last but not least, the underground community itself. The focus is on the late socialist era, the era of normalisation and power consolidation that followed in the wake of the Prague Spring suppression in 1968.

A History of Trust and Mistrust within the Church

The origins of the underground Church date back to the late 1940s and 1950s, to the period when the Catholic Church in Slovakia was facing the harshest persecution by the communist state. At the time, the ruling party had incarcerated most members of the Czechoslovak episcopate and so the Vatican decided to ordain underground Bishops to ensure that the Church in Czechoslovakia would not be left without a functional hierarchy. The underground Church of the 1940s and 1950s was led by secretly ordained Bishops and clergy,[4] with the laity also playing an important role, especially those who had been active in the pre-communist Catholic Action and the Rodina community established by the Croatian anti-fascist priest, Tomislav Poglajen Kolakovič.[5] The communist state banned Catholic associations but many lay men and women continued to meet in secret. Most of the leaders of these lay groups were eventually detained and sentenced to long-term imprisonment. During the 1960s, these Catholics were released and helped to launch Church reform in

2 In its most recent metamorphosis, the Secret Church is being portrayed as never divided from the official Church. In part, this emphasis on unity is a response to attempts emerging within the Catholic milieu to cast (out) the underground community as a Czechoslovak-ist or laicist aberration from the official hierarchy. This was part of a broader campaign to strengthen the legitimacy of the hierarchy in defiance of the increasing questioning it has faced in the aftermath of the dubious suspension of Archbishop Róbert Bezák. Likewise, nationalist historiographies of the late socialist period tend to portray the underground Church as a "Czechoslovak-ist" interest group maintaining shaky relations with the Church hierarchy.

3 The Association of Catholic Clergy Pacem in Terris, was a regime-sponsored organisation of Catholic clergy in Communist Czechoslovakia between 1971 and 1989. Its name was taken from the well-known encyclical *Pacem in Terris* of the reform Pope John XXIII.

4 MIKLOŠKO, František. *Nebudete ich môcť rozvrátiť. Z osudov katolíckej cirkvi na Slovensku v rokoch 1943 – 89.* Bratislava : Archa, 1991, pp. 62–67.

5 MIKLOŠKO 1991, pp. 159–161.

the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, a second ecumenical council which addressed the relationship between the Catholic Church and the modern world. Central to this reform was the Project of Council Renewal (Dielo koncilovej obnovy) (DKO). The priority of Czech and Slovak Catholics at the time was a de-politicisation and de-coupling of the Church and state.

The DKO was central to rebuilding the lines of trust between the public church and the underground Church, which had been severed with the existence and persecution of people Catholicism. At the DKO meetings (the central one took place in Velehrad in May 1968), the laity met with the hierarchy to discuss the future of the church. In particular, the hierarchy sought to assert itself, arguing against the hither-to very limited and limiting definition of religious freedom. In the words of Bishop of Nitra diocese Eduard Nécsey:

> Religious freedom is a broader term. Alongside the full freedom of conducting rituals, it also demands the Church to have the freedom to manage its matters in accord with the laws of the Church, the right to educate future priests, to have [religious] orders and to religious instruction etc. This necessitates proper media and the right to use radio and television, since these belong also to the religious citizens.[6]

This and other similar pronouncements were crucial, not only for containing the state's influence in the Church, but also in presenting the hierarchy as trustworthy for the Catholic faithful and especially the former members of the underground Church.

The 1970s – The Low Point of Trust

The early 1970s saw several developments in terms of local and transnational Church organisation as well as in structure and ideology, which dealt a serious blow to the Catholic activists' trust in the local hierarchy as well as in the Vatican. With the end of the Prague Spring, these Catholics were forced back to the "underground", not so much forcefully but certainly so in the institutional subjugation of the Church to the state. The beginning of the 1970s in particular deeply challenged the rudimentary trust that was being built along the common lines created during the Prague Spring.

The process of normalisation in religious life involved renewed state control of the Catholic hierarchy, the revival of the pro-state "patriotic" clergy movement within the Church and the suppression of re-emerging and re-assertive Catholic societies and orders, as well as the issue of religious instruction at schools.[7] The Church was re-established as a "patriotic Church" and was not allowed to function independent of the Communist state. The Project of Council Renewal was abolished and the project's leaders, who by that time had assumed positions in bishoprics, were replaced with patriotic priests.[8] In 1971, a new association of clergy loyal to the Socialist state, the ZKD-PIT, was established and immediately assumed full control of the Church and the decimated hierarchy. In addition to its original "patriotic" mission, the pro-Communist priests made support for peace—in its

6 *Katolícke noviny*, 19 May 1968, Quoted in: VNUK, František. Dielo koncilovej obnovy (K 50. Výročiu jeho vzniku a zániku. In *Aliancia za nedeľu*, 8 May 2018. http://alianciazanedelu.sk/archiv/1648

7 PEŠEK, Jan – BARNOVSKÝ, Michal. *V zovretí normalizácie. Cirkvi na Slovensku 1969 – 1980*. Bratislava : VEDA, 2016, pp. 24–25.

8 PEŠEK – BARNOVSKÝ 2016, pp. 21, 24–25.

Communist interpretation—their main task.[9] Indeed, the official name bore the title of the papal encyclical *Pacem in Terris*; calling for peace.

The Vatican played crucial role in the reconstruction and legitimisation of the patriotic Church after the Prague Spring. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Vatican acknowledged communist governments as legitimate[10] and seemed to have come very close to accepting the Church as imagined by the Communists. First, the Holy See agreed to name three new bishops, Ján Pásztor, Jozef Feranec, Július Gábriš, who were known for their support of the Communist Party. These three Bishops endorsed the post-Prague Spring regime and supported current political leadership. On a rhetorical level, the Church hierarchy in Slovakia regularly declared its "socialist patriotism" and Church leadership publicly reiterated its attachment to "the socialist homeland, a commitment to the revolutionary transformation of society [and] the cause of communism."[11] The Bishops were also ready to reject any attempts to question the socialist state's legitimacy, policies or rhetoric. In 1977, when the human rights movement Charter 77 demanded that the Czechoslovak state observe its own obligations to the Helsinki Final Act, the Bishops condemned the initiative as an unfair and unpatriotic attack on the socialist state.[12] The Czechoslovak hierarchy did not see these issues as problematic and continued to express their support for the "peace" efforts of the state.[13] Second, the Vatican agreed to reduce support for Slovak Catholic émigrés in Rome, especially those who were counted amongst the most consistent critics of the "patriotic" Church. Finally, the Vatican agreed to circumscribe the role of the secretly ordained bishops and clergy.

The Vatican weakened its contacts with the best-known representatives of both groups, namely Bishop Pavol Hnilica, who had been active in the Rome emigration but was ordered to be silent on the situation of the church in Czechoslovakia, whilst the secretly ordained Bishop Ján Korec was ordered to stop underground ordinations.[14]

The Church being nearly fully absorbed by the state was, however, challenged by the Vatican itself after the election of Pope John Paul II in 1978. Let us first explore how the underground Church responded to this fundamental challenge to its connection with Rome, i.e., its institutional lifeline.

Towards the end of the 1970s, the underground Church began to catch a second wind, focusing now on expanding its reach among the Catholic laity.[15] Silvester Krčméry and Vladimír Jukl, the lay leaders of the underground community, did this primarily through

9 See e.g.: HOCHMANN, František. *Ve službách dobra a pokoje. Sborník druhého celostátniho sjezdu Sdružení katolíckych duchovních Pacem in terris, ČSSR roku 1980*. Praha : Ústřední církevní nakladatelství, 1981.

10 LUXMOORE, Jonathan – BABIUCH, Jolanta. *The Vatican and the Red Flag. The Struggle for the Soul of Eastern Europe*. New York : Geoffrey Chapman, 1999, pp. 110–153.

11 WHITE, Stephen. *Russia's new politics: The management of a Postcommunist Society*. 4th ed. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2004 (1st edition 1999), p. 182.

12 PEŠEK – BARNOVSKÝ 2016, pp. 86–87.

13 Every issue of *Duchovný pastier*, the weekly controlled by Pacem in Terris, included reports documenting the various ways in which the Church expressed its support for the state. See e.g. Zo života Pacem in terris. In *Duchovný pastier*, 10 December 1973, p. 443; *Společně za mír a život, proti jaderné válce*. Praha : Svoboda, 1983.

14 HALAS, X. František. *Fenomén Vatikán. Idea, dějiny a současnost papežství – Diplomacie Svatého stolce – České země a Vatikán*. Brno : Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury, 2004, pp. 611–623; HRABOVEC, Emília. *Slovensko a Svätá stolica v kontexte vatikánskej východnej politiky (1962–1989)*. Bratislava : Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave, 2016, pp. 158–159.

15 Interview with Vladimír Jukl [in Slovak], interviewer Agáta Šústová Drelová, from 7 January 2010; Interview with František Mikloško[in Slovak], interviewer Agáta Šústová Drelová, from 13 July 2010; Interview with Ján Čarnogurský [in Slovak], interviewer Agáta Šústová Drelová, from 11 November 2011.

forging personal relationships with students studying in Bratislava who had returned to their hometowns and built up new communities. The entire mobilisation happened clandestinely, outside of the official Church. The Slovak underground Church developed a structure with many different branches or movements that offered Slovak Catholics of all ages and needs a range of activities and programs for the kind of spiritual development they were unable to pursue in the official Catholic Church, or in the public sphere more generally.[16] This community included the Lay Apostolate, the Fatima Movement, the Movement of Christian Families, the Focolare Movement, the Movement of Christian Youth Associations, as well as clandestinely organised communities of male religious orders (Salesians, Franciscans, Jesuits, etc.) and female religious orders. The leaders of these organisations estimated membership in the 1970s at around 2000, though by the 1980s, this number had grown to 5000 making the underground Church the largest non-communist independent association in the country.[17] By the mid-1970s, the growing underground Church organised meetings nationwide and its leaders began to think about the public engagement of these communities.[18] After "minor work" in secret in the 1970s, the goal of the underground Church in the 1980s, according to Jukl, became to "appeal to the masses."[19]

Catholic activists focused on work outside of the traditional spaces of the church and accordingly, their first initiatives were attempted without the official Church structures. Towards the end of the 1970s, as Catholic Churches in the wider region—particularly in Poland—were increasingly involved with their nations and began to make contacts with independent associations, it was clear to the underground Catholics in Slovakia that the Czechoslovak state was not going to allow the emergence of alternative public structures. Also, the Slovak Church hierarchy was not going to abandon support for the state in this regard,[20] which became very clear after the emergence of Charter 77 in 1977. Encouraged by the fact that the Czechoslovak government had signed the Helsinki Accords (the final act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe), which specified, among other things, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and belief, the Charter 77 movement began to monitor observance of these rights by the Czechoslovak state and criticise any shortcomings.[21]

The underground Slovak Catholics, now inspired by the emergence of Charter 77, attempted the first grassroots mobilisation of Catholics, focusing on religious rights. The lay leaders of underground Church communities, Jukl and Krčméry, composed a "memorandum" criticising the current situation of the churches, especially the strict official control of their public actions and suppression of any activities which were not allowed by the state.[22] In the late 1970s, they began to gather signatures in support of the memo-

16 For Rodinné spoločenstvo (Family Fellowship) see: HROMNÍK, Milan. Hnutie kresťanských rodín na Slovensku. In *Viera a* Život, 1991, Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 208–210.
17 Interview with Vladimír Jukl [in Slovak], interviewer Agáta Šústová Drelová, from 7 January 2010; Interview with František Mikloško[in Slovak], interviewer Agáta Šústová Drelová, from 13 July 2010; Interview with Ján Čarnogurský [in Slovak], interviewer Agáta Šústová Drelová, from 11 November 2011.
18 Interview with Vladimír Jukl, from 7 January 2010.
19 Interview with Vladimír Jukl, from 7 January 2010.
20 See e.g.: BLAŽEK, Petr (ed.) *Opozice a odpor proti komunistickemu režimu v Československu, 1968 – 1989.* Praha : Dokořán, 2005.
21 For full text of the Final Accords see http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/osce/basics/finact75.htm [last viewed 5 September 2015].
22 LETZ, Róbert. Prenasledovanie Kresťanov na Slovensku. In MIKLOŠKO, František – SMOLÍK, Peter – SMOLÍKOVÁ, Gabriela (eds.) *Zločiny Komunizmu na Slovensku 1948 – 1989, Vol. 1.* Prešov : Vydavateľstvo Michala Vaška, 2001, pp. 267–335.

randum[23] though it eventually failed, as some underground Church members rejected it as an "unnecessary provocation."[24]

Jukl and Krčméry understood this rejection as a signal that the underground Church was not strong enough to mobilise on its own in public.[25] Not only was the hierarchy unsupportive of independent Catholic organisation, but the underground Catholic leaders did not seem to have enough support within their own communities. However, at about the same time, another event took place that would greatly impact Catholics in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere: Karol Józef Wojtyła was elected pope, taking the name John Paul II. This appointment was crucial in encouraging wider segments of the underground Church to become involved in the public life of the official Church. There were also attempts to encourage the leaders of the official Church to weaken their ties with the state and support grassroots Catholic mobilisation.

Rebuilding Trust in 1980 – Within the Hierarchy and Against Pacem in Terris

Shortly after taking office, John Paul II presented a programme that would become one of the central planes for rebuilding the underground Church's trust in the papacy and in the local hierarchy. The pope called on individual Churches to engage in what was effectively a cultural nationalist project, aimed "to regenerate the true character of the nation, which is to be manifested in its culture, that is, in its art, thought, and a way of life."[26] Considered together with the papal documents on human rights and social justice, this call compelled Catholics to what James R. Felak coined "a Wojtyłan paradigm"—a combination of "patriotism with openness to reconciliation, bridge-building, and cooperation, all concerns fostered by the Catholic Church at least since the Second Vatican Council."[27] In Eastern Europe, this cultural nationalism was part of a broader programme of public engagement in "moral resistance", which per the pope, ought to address two main objectives: the reawakening of each nation's Christian spirit through culture, and a historical awareness and identification of the values and ideas which Christians and non-believers hold in common.[28]

He used anniversaries to promote this agenda and present the Catholic Church as an integral part of the individual nations of Central and Eastern Europe and their national histories. In 1984, Pope John Paul II announced the start of the Methodian Year, commemorating the 1100th anniversary of the death of St. Methodius. Although this anniversary was intended by to be a common celebration for all Slavic nations, the pope focused especially on Czechoslovakia. He planned to pay an official visit to the country to celebrate the famous ninth-century mission as a "Christianising mission."[29] Two years later, John Paul II announced the Church-wide celebration of a special "Marian year", which was to be

23 Interview with Vladimír Jukl, from 7 January 2010.
24 Interview with Vladimír Jukl, from 7 January 2010.
25 ŠIMULČÍK, Ján. *Zápas* o *nádej. Kroniky tajných kňazov 1969 – 1989*. Prešov : Vydavateľstvo Michala Vaška, 2002, pp. 76–77.
26 See e.g.: HUTCHINSON, John. Cultural nationalism. In BREUILLY, John (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism. Oxford handbooks in history*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2015, pp. 75–96.
27 FELAK, James. *A Wojtyłan Paradigm for Addressing Historically.* (Unpublished manuscript, University of Washington, 2014).
28 LUXMOORE – BABIUCH 1999, p. 181.
29 HAĽKO, Jozef. „Nemohol som k vám prísť..." (O pokusoch pozvať pápeža Jána Pavla II. do komunistického Československa). In *Pamäť národa*, 2011, Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 44–49.

commemorated on 7 June 1987 and completed on 15 August 1988.[30] It would be devoted to Mary, "Mother of God and Mother of the Church", and would mark the 2000th anniversary of the birth of Mary. Similar to the Methodian year, the Marian year was intended to be preparation for the 2000th anniversary of the birth of Christ. In accounts written by underground Catholics, the Marian year is portrayed as the "resurrection of the Church" and at the same time, the culmination of the "national awakening" of Catholics encouraged by John Paul II.[31]

The new pope did not completely abandon the conciliatory approach maintained by the two previous popes, continuing to acknowledge the communist governments as legal representatives of the socialist states, and so diplomatic negotiations with the Czechoslovak state went on as before. However, he no longer saw these governments as the sole representatives of their nations and began to talk about groups of Catholics excluded from the socialist patriotic project as the "true representatives of the nation." As he told Vatican-accredited diplomats shortly after his election, the Church "remained open to every country and regime in keeping with proven means of diplomacy and negotiation." However, he suggested that these terms were not exclusive and furthermore, not the "authentic representatives of nations." At a meeting with diplomats, the pope mentioned spokesmen for "governments, regimes, and political structures", but also talked about "authentic representatives of peoples and nations".[32] Who these authentic representatives were became clear in his new approach to émigrés and underground communities, especially in how he actively sought to involve these groups into public and private religious life.

John Paul II made gestures of trust towards Catholic activists who were challenged during the previous pontificate. He supported lay movements, especially those which were known for their loyalty to the papacy, as was the case of the leading lay Catholic movement, Slovakia's Lay Apostolate. In fact, this pope was crucial for the emergence of the Slovak underground Church.[33] A trip by the Slovak Catholic laity to the pope's visit to Poland in 1983, which was vital for the confidence of the underground Church, did not happen solely on their own initiative. During the visit to Poland, John Paul II "invited" Jukl and Krčméry to visit.[34] Later, in 1987, these laymen would be invited to the Synod of Bishops held in Rome as representatives of the Slovak laity.[35] The pope not only encouraged Catholics to become involved in the creation of nationalised culture, but he himself personally engaged in creating this culture, in a sense showing these actors how to do it.

Last but not least, the papacy played an important role in the underground Church's reconstruction of trust in the hierarchy. The main impulse was papal support for the Catholic hierarchy (exemplified especially in *Quidam Episcopi* and letters to the local hierarchy), as central leaders of the Church on one hand, and rejection of the current leading role of the ZKD-PIT on the other. In the early 1980s, underground Church leaders sent a letter to members of the ZKD-PIT and the Slovak episcopate (undated), in which they protested against the ZKD-PIT, complaining that the current level and form of involve-

30 WEIGEL, George. *Witness to Hope. The Biography of Pope John Paul II.* New York : Cliff Street Books, 1999, p. 527.
31 MIKLOŠKO 1991, p. 138.
32 *L'Osservatore Romano*, 19 October and 15 December, quoted in: LUXMOORE – BABIUCH 1999, p. 208.
33 JUKL, Vladimír. Gabriel. In ŠIMULČÍK, Ján (ed.) *Zápas o nádej*. Bratislava : Vydavateľstvo Michala Vaška, 2000, pp. 55–56.
34 MIKLOŠKO 1991, p. 126.
35 PEŠEK – BARNOVSKÝ 2016, p. 180.

ment of the Catholic Church in public life in Czechoslovakia was not satisfactory. They condemned the fact that the laity was not allowed to play any role in the public engagement of the Church.[36]

Clearly influenced by the pope and his understanding of national history, these laity groups thought that since priests had been connected "with their nations and their histories, with the society in which they live…It is therefore legitimate to ask whether their [public] work…addresses the real problems of society in which we live and reflects the responsibility we as Catholics have for its present and future."[37] They did not protest the ZKD-PIT's engagement for "peace", or for that matter, the "building of the socialist system", but the way this was done, especially the fact that its public involvement reflected the ideology of the ruling Communist Party rather than the current teachings of the Catholic Church.[38] Peace, they felt, could not be separated from justice—a respect for human rights—and it was "fair", according to these Catholics, that in public life, the Church should be free from the state. They also believed that not only the ZKD-PIT, but also other segments of the Church should be involved in this public life and accordingly, in the creation of a nationalised culture. They felt that the current level of public engagement of the Catholic hierarchy and the ZKD-PIT did not sufficiently reflect "the needs of the faithful" and more broadly, the nation. The Church, in their view, was supposed to "bring the Christian spirit into societal thought, morals, laws, and the structure of society."[39] The papal appeal for mobilisation of the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia during the Methodian year was seen by many of these underground Catholics as a call to engage in the life of the nation and in the creation of a nationalised culture in more active ways.

This anniversary was, of course, especially pertinent to Czechoslovakia, though not only because Cyril and Methodius began their Christian mission in its territory in Great Moravia.[40] The pope held up Methodius, the first Archbishop of Pannonia, as a role model for the Episcopate and, more broadly, Church leaders in Czechoslovakia. At various occasions in the run up to and during the anniversary year, John Paul II emphasized Methodius' assertive Church leadership and "willingness to suffer for the Church", as well as preservation of the local Church's unity with Rome.[41]

In sum, the pope used his power to begin rebuilding trust and provided symbolic language—a return to Christian roots and cultural forms, like rituals and pilgrimages—to forge this trust.

The Communist state pushed back, widely engaging the ZKD-PIT in a campaign against the papal programme, but some members of the hierarchy, including one Bishop, dissented, opening a new space for building a mutual trust with underground Church community, which had in the meantime, emerged as a powerful presence at traditional pilgrimages.

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36 ŠIMULČÍK, Ján (ed.) *Združenie katolíckych duchovných Pacem in terris. Výber zo samizdatových dokumnetov 1969 – 1989*. Prešov : Vydavateľstvo Michala Vaška, 2002, No. 6, pp. 93–102.
37 ŠIMULČÍK 2002, *Združenie*, No. 6, p. 94.
38 ŠIMULČÍK 2002, *Združenie*, No. 6, p. 102.
39 MIKLOŠKO 1991, p. 131.
40 CASAROLI, Agostino. *Třýzeň Trpělivosti. Svatý stolec a komunistické země (1963 – 1989).* Praha : Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2001, pp. 180–183.
41 Kázeň sv. Otca Jána Pavla II.: „Otcovia viery a učitelia kultúry", ktorú predniesol 14. Februára 1985 v bazilike Sv. Klimenta v Ríme. In HNILICA, Ján. *Svätí Cyril a Metod. Horliví hlásatelia Božieho Slova a verní pastieri cirkvi*. Bratislava : Alfa, 1990, p. 182.

Bishop Gábriš of the Trnava diocese planned to use the Methodian year as preparation for the consecration to Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows. The act of consecration would be done on the feast of Cyril and Methodius in July 1985. On 16 September 1984, Gábriš addressed a congregation of more than 50 000 mostly young people, describing as he saw it, the "vital" role of Marian devotion in the past, present and future of the Slovak nation.[42] According to the bishop "Christianity gave birth to our nation...[and] the Marian Cult allowed for happy historical evolution." Therefore, he told the audience "We are a Marian nation!"[43] He then went on to describe the fate of the Slovak Republic as closely interrelated with the fate of the Catholic Church.

In some respects, the bishop followed the papal call for hierarchies to engage in the public revival of nationalised culture, but in several important respects, he did not follow the papal interpretation of national histories. For example, Gábriš did not provide any special role for the Vatican in this narrative, as had been emphasized by John Paul II. Nor did he place the Slovak nation within the broader programme of European unification, the key motivation behind the papal interpretation. The sermon was nonetheless popular, even among underground Catholics, who strongly pushed for loyalty to the papacy in the Church.[44] This sermon was embraced by these Slovak Catholics as the authentic history of the Slovak nation and became central to their understanding of the current standing of the Slovak Church, for their construction of a national Catholic narrative, and ultimately for their creation of a nationalised public Catholic culture. For underground Catholics, this was the first time the Church had been positioned in the broader narrative of Slovak history and from this point on, these Catholics began to reciprocate this national Catholic narrative as an important part of their involvement with the official national identity.[45] This recognition of underground Catholics as part of the Catholic Church with the Slovak nation through suffering was unwittingly supported by the official authorities.

Pilgrimages as Spaces of Trust

The opening event of the Marian year, a pilgrimage to Šaštín on the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows in September 1987, helped to form the still rather diverse underground community into a unified public community. According to *samizdat*[46] reports, the event was attended by over 2000 young people who travelled to Šaštín from around Slovakia, also organising an all-night programme in the basilica.[47] At the pilgrimage, the leaders around Jukl, Mikloško and Krčméry organised the first nation-wide meeting of the various groups that constituted the underground Church, similar to meeting that took place in Levoča in

42 Šastínsky príhovor otca biskupa Gábriša. In *Náboženstvo a súčasnosť*, 1984, No. 5, p. 8.
43 Šastínsky príhovor 1984, p. 8.
44 Interview with Július Brocka [in Slovak], interviewer Agáta Šústová Drelová, from 13 July 2010; Interview with Vladimír Jukl, from 7 January 2010; Interview with František Mikloško [in Slovak], interviewer Agáta Šústová Drelová, from 13 July 2010; Interview with Pavol Abrhan [in Slovak], interviewer Agáta Šústová Drelová, from23 July 2010.
45 KOREC, Ján Ch.. "Slovensko čo robíš". In *Náboženstvo a súčasnosť*, 1983, No. 3, pp. 2–3; Mária v dejinách spásy. In *Rodinné spoločenstvo*, 1985, No. 4, pp. 2–6; Cesta národa s jeho Patrónkou. In *Náboženstvo a súčasnosť,* 1985, No. 3, p. 2; Sedembolestná. In *Náboženstvo a súčasnosť,* 1984, No. 3, pp. 2–3; Zasväcujúca modlitba slovenského národa Sedembolestnej Panne Márii. In *Náboženstvo a súčasnosť,* 1985, No. 1, p. 9; Mariánska tradícia v našom národe. In *Pokoj a dobro*, 1985, p. 10.
46 The term, Russian for self-publishing, was used across Central Eastern Europe, especially during the Communist era, to refer to both the dissident practice of clandestine makeshift publishing of censored materials (original production as well as copies of officially blacklisted texts) and to the products of this practice.
47 Šaštín – September 1987. In *Náboženstvo a súčasnosť*, 1987, No. 5, p. 11; See also HLINKA, Anton. *Sila slabých a slabosť silných. Cirkev na Slovensku v rokoch 1945 – 89*. Bratislava : Tatran, 1990, p. 305.

July 1987. At the event, leaders openly presented themselves to the community. The clerical leader of the underground community, Bishop Korec, joined the underground Catholics for the first time. The lay leaders, Jukl, Krčméry, Mikloško and Čarnogurský, also spoke during the all-night programme. Korec was present for the first time as a priest within the public space of the official Church—despite the fact that the official Church had not recognised him as a legitimate leader.

The Marian year of 1987 saw, according to both underground and official sources, unprecedentedly high numbers of pilgrims.[48] According to a samizdat author, the celebrations of the Marian year in Levoča with more than 200 000 pilgrims amply illustrate the increase;[49] 40 000 attended the national pilgrimage to Šaštín and 100 000 attended the event in Gaboltov, Eastern Slovakia.[50]

Lay groups were also encouraged by leading members of the official church. The apostolic administrator Štefan Garaj delivered a sermon on the occasion of the Marian year, in which he told the congregation of more than 140 000 that "the love and loyalty of the Slovak nation for the Virgin Mary and her Son is a guarantee of the bright future of our people."[51] These words, published in samizdat, were praised as clear gestures of the administrator's fidelity to the pope and therefore a demonstration of his trustworthiness. A samizdat report approvingly quoted Garaj, administrator of the Spiš Diocese, who said that the high number of attendees was also a clear sign of the "fidelity of the Slovak nation to our Heavenly Mother and her Son."[52] The growing numbers at pilgrimages were seen by the underground Church as a sign of the re-emerging Catholic character of the Slovak nation and the self-assertion of the Church. Pilgrimages organised during the Marian year served to increase the self-confidence of the underground community. However, by the end of that year, the underground Church would not be the only force using pilgrimages as tools for nation-wide mobilisation.

The events to follow revealed that the current hierarchy had not yet espoused the broader definition of religious freedom advocated by Nécsey during the Prague Spring, which now became an important shared concept. In March 1988, the underground Catholics organised the first public Catholic demonstration for religious freedom, an occasion that would be the central event mobilising support for the creation of a nationalised public Catholic culture. Once again, transnational support was crucial. Encouraged by the apparently highly functional underground information channels and success of mass pilgrimages, in March 1988, underground community leaders organized the biggest public demonstration since the Prague Spring in Slovakia. Notably, Slovak emigrés played an important role during the initial stages of this initiative. The idea to organise a non-violent demonstration came from Marián Šťastný, hockey coach and vice-chairman of the Slovak World Congress. His original plan was to co-ordinate a demonstration in Bratislava with demonstrations in front of Czechoslovak embassies across Western Europe, however, it was eventually left unrealised. Nevertheless, an important role was played by Western broadcasting. Radio Free Europe

48 Levočská púť 1987. In *Náboženstvo a súčasnosť*, 1987, No. 4, pp. 5–7; Šaštín – September 1987, p. 11; Šaštín – 1988. In *Katolícky mesačník*, 1988, No. 5, p. 1; MARTIN, Peter. The Pilgrimage to Levoča. In *Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty*, 14 July 1988, p. 19; Myšlienky z Levočskej púte. In *Náboženstvo a súčasnosť*, 1988, No. 3, p. 3.
49 Levočská púť 1987, pp. 5–7.
50 Levočská púť 1987, pp. 5–7; K Mariánskemu roku. In *Náboženstvo a súčasnosť*, 1987, No. 4, pp. 2–5.
51 Levočská púť 1987, p. 5.
52 Levočská púť 1987, p. 5.

(RFE) and the Voice of America (VOA) perceived the situation of the Catholic faithful as part of the broader assertion of civic society against "oppressive" communist states and fully supported the demonstration.[53] RFE and the VOA filled the airwaves with promotions within two days, while in Slovakia, announcements were posted on church notice boards instructing Catholics that "we will express our support for these demands by holding lit candles during the gathering."[54] On 25 March 1988, more than ten thousand Catholics assembled in Hviezdoslav Square in downtown Bratislava in defiance of a police ban.[55] Crucially, for many of the Catholic participants, the demonstration fell on Good Friday, a major Catholic feast commemorating the crucifixion of Jesus. This silent demonstration would become known as the "Candle Demonstration." The underground Church activists called on the state to not only "fill the vacant bishoprics in accordance with the decision of the Holy Father" and "grant greater religious freedom in Czechoslovakia", but also to instate the "full observance of civil law in Czechoslovakia."[56] The cultural nationalism of the underground Church had thus changed from narrowly focused on a national spiritual renewal to supporting the broader cause of respect for human rights. As one samizdat author claimed, "as believers we are also citizens and we should therefore express our demands for the [recognition of the] rights of the Church in a civic way, appealing to our laws."[57] The demonstration itself was organised in a more "civic" space—a public square—however, reminiscent of the pilgrimages, they prayed and sang the papal anthem as well as national Marian songs.[58]

The reaction of state authorities and the official Church in Czechoslovakia to the petition and the Candle Demonstration confirmed that the official authorities were not going to tolerate unsanctioned religious activities and that most official Church dignitaries, for whom trust of the official authorities continued to take priority over pastoral care, would fall into line. There were some notable exceptions, which will be elaborated on below. The petition landed Augustín Navrátil in a psychiatric ward and the official propaganda launched a counter-campaign.[59] At the Candle Demonstration, police moved in with clubs, dogs, a water cannon and tear gas, beating the demonstrators and arresting more than a hundred. Similarly, even though the petition was tolerated, several signature collectors were detained and beaten by the secret police, the infamous ŠtB-Štátna bezpečnosť (State Security).[60] The reaction of Catholic Bishops to the Candle Demonstration dealt a serious blow to a still rather shaky trust in the official hierarchy, which remained silent, or more precisely, enveloped by ZKD-PIT priests. This was especially the case of the newly appointed Bishop of Trnava, Ján Sokol, in whom the Catholic activists had had the highest expectations.

53 HALL, Trevor. *Pope John Paul II. A Man and His People*. Gloversville : Bookthrift, 1985, pp. 27–56.
54 Verejné zhromaždenie. In *Bratislavské listy*, 1988, No. 1, p. 10.
55 According to Čarnogurský, the demonstration was an attempt to "meld the religious and the civic dissent." While the crowd was overwhelmingly Catholic, there were a few civic activists such as Milan Šimečka or the environmental activist Marta Filková. Though for the presence of civic activists and calls for civic freedom, it would be far-fetched to see this event as a definite end of isolation for dissent and independent groups in Slovakia. KENNEY, Padraic. *The Carnival of Revolution. Central Europe in 1989*. Princeton : Princeton University Press, 2002, pp. 215–217.
56 The text of this letter was republished in samizdat: *Verejné zhromaždenie*, 1988, p. 10.
57 Bratislavský veľký piatok. In *Náboženstvo a súčasnosť*, 1988, No. 2, pp. 8–9; also see: PONICKÁ, Hana. Hodina Bratislavy, 25. 3. 1988. In *Hlas Slovenska*, 1988, No. 2, pp. 15–18.
58 Bratislavský veľký piatok 1988, pp. 8–9.
59 Bratislavský veľký piatok 1988, p. 37.
60 Petícia za náboženskú slobodu, In *Náboženstvo a súčasnosť,* 1988, No. 2, p. 8.

Trust and Involvement of the State

Moreover, the official authorities now attempted to take over the pilgrimages and turn them from spaces of trust to spaces of lay mobilisation in line with the Communist agenda. They intensified efforts to characterize the underground Church as equivalent to the wartime Slovak Republic (1939 – 1945), portraying any unauthorised collective religious activity in this way. This type of framing was also intended to isolate the underground Church from civic dissidents and from the Western human rights organisations, both of which were careful not to lend support to any fundamentalist—not to mention neo-fascist—groups.[61] Shortly after the launch of the petition for religious freedom in January 1988, and before the demonstration was held, a series of articles published in *Pravda* (10 – 12 February 1988) identified Pavol Čarnogurský, father of activist Ján Čarnogurský and a deputy in the supposedly "reactionary" wartime Slovak Assembly, as the leader of the underground Church.[62] This inaccuracy was reiterated in commentaries at the Candle Demonstration, which was described as the work of "Pavol Čarnogurský and his accomplices from the illegal church structures and emigration, working in the service of world reaction."[63] The author of a *Smena* article saw the demonstration as a "return" to the era before February 1948 (date of the Communist takeover).[64] Čarnogurský was known to many members of the underground Church community and respected in a small circle around his son, Ján Čarnogurský, but he certainly was not any leader of the underground community.

By mid-1988, authorities at the Ministry of Culture's Office for Religious Affairs started to portray religion as a positive force in society more actively. "It is absurd to claim", maintained the newly appointed head of the office, Matej Lúčan, that "socialist society and the KSČ[65] see believers as political enemies and would seek the suppression of religion and churches." Although, as he maintained "our society derives its building of socialism from a scientific world view…our society is not an atheistic society."[66] Although this may well have been—as was the case many times in the past—simply paying a lip service to hush critics abroad, this time the pronouncements were followed by concrete action. The official authorities returned to negotiations with the Vatican and began to re-establish the Catholic Church as a nationally functional institution. The first changes were of an administrative character. In 1988, the Vatican and Czechoslovak diplomats negotiated the appointment of two bishops, Sokol, Bishop of Trnava and František Tondra, Bishop of Spiš. Even more importantly, by 1989, Bishop Sokol was promoted to Archbishop of the Trnava Archdiocese. The independent ecclesiastical Slovak province, the highest administrative unit of the Church in Slovakia, now had its leader.[67] The official authorities had taken the first steps in this direction in 1973 when three bishops were named, and later in 1977, when the Church on current Slovak territory formed an independent ecclesiastical province. However, until 1989, the Church was not capable of functioning on a national scale. Without

61 Interview with František Mikloško[in Slovak], interviewer Agáta Šústová Drelová, from 13 July 2010; Interview with Ján Čarnogurský [in Slovak], interviewer Agáta Šústová Drelová, from 11 November 2011.
62 DOBRÝ, Andrej (pseudonym). Kto je Pavol Čarnogurský, „Tajná cirkev" v službách antikomunizmu. In *Pravda*, 11 February 1988, p. 4; Náš ľud rozpozná svetlo od tmy. In *Pravda,* 12 February 1988, p. 4.
63 Kto chce zneužiť veriacich? In *Večerník*, 24 March 1988, p. 1; Kto stojí v pozadí? in *Večerník*, 25 March 1988, p. 1; Akcia nevyšla podľa scenára. In *Večerník*, 28 March 1988, p. 1.
64 In *Smena*, 24 March 1988, p. 1.
65 Komunistická strana Česko-Slovenska (The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia).
66 PEŠEK –BARNOVSKÝ 2016, p. 155.
67 PEŠEK – BARNOVSKÝ 2016, pp. 135–144.

an archbishop, the Church could be best described as an aggregate of more-or-less isolated dioceses. But now that the Church had its leader, it could begin to work as a nationally functional institution.

As far as Church administration was concerned, the current state began to resemble those in Poland, Hungary and Croatia in the 1960s, where the churches were institutionally reconstructed. Authorities also began to support the official Church with the organisation of pilgrimages.[68] For example, the official authorities helped individual parishes transport pilgrims to the sites and there the VB-Verejná bezpečnosť (Public Security) helped organise crowds.[69] There were, however, limits to these changes.

The official authorities did not intend these shifts to enable any greater autonomy of the Church from the state, as had been the case in Poland and as the underground communities had imagined since the 1960s. For reasons which will be explained, it is more probable that the official authorities were aiming to encourage the mobilisation of Catholics in close connection with the socialist state, a mobilisation which would involve a strengthening of the ZKD-PIT on the one hand, and the gradual edging out of the underground Catholic communities on the other.[70] Following the model of the Orthodox Church, the Communists in Czechoslovakia supported the local Church hierarchy but at the same time, sought to maintain a connection with the state directly but also via the politicised priests in the ZKD-PIT. The ZKD-PIT would remain in place to preserve the Church as related to state socialism.[71]

The official authorities used the Marian year to strengthen the hierarchy and allow greater space for Catholic mobilisation within official spaces and at the same time, to roll back the influence of the underground Church.[72] The goal was to prevent the underground Church from "misusing" official Church events as displays of Catholic triumphalism and public chants of demands for the change of religious policies. As is explored below, this strategy was successful only to a point. Indeed, by November 1989, the Catholic Church in Slovakia looked rather different from what was intended. By this time, there was not only—as the official authorities planned—a more complete episcopate, but there was also a strong underground Church closely connected to civic opposition in Slovakia and in the Czech lands.

Trust Surpassing National and Institutional Boundaries

The underground Catholics' trust in the Church hierarchy was shaken after underground Church. However, an important actor who had already been a great source of trust in the hierarchy, reappeared. His involvement showed, once again, that the reconstruction of trust surpassed the frontiers of individual national churches. Following the demonstration, the underground Catholics received unprecedented support from across Czechoslovakia, surrounding countries as well as the whole of Europe. The underground community was

68 PEŠEK – BARNOVSKÝ 2016, pp. 144–158.
69 PEŠEK – BARNOVSKÝ 2016, p. 156.
70 PEŠEK – BARNOVSKÝ 2016, p. 156.
71 Meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia from 13 May 1988. Letter from František Tomášek to the Government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic to the President Dr. Lubomír Štrougal. Quoted in: PEŠEK – BARNOVSKÝ 2016, p. 153.
72 Slovak National Archive (SNA), Bratislava, Slovakia, Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, fond (f) 794/11,Válek, Miroslav, Pre Informáciu, Informácia o priebehu pútí na rok 1987 a návrh opatrení pre rok 1988, 16 Máj 1988.

openly supported by the most senior clergyman in Czechoslovakia, Cardinal František Tomášek. The Cardinal played a central role in maintaining a positive image of the underground Church. By this point, Tomášek used the official tolerance towards public Catholic worship but did not back down from his support of civic dissent. He supported the demonstration during the major Catholic feast of St. Vojtech at central Prague's Cathedral of St. Vitus, claiming that these Catholics acted "in unity with Christ", and hinting that, despite a lack of support from the Slovak hierarchy, this Catholic protest happened in unity with the Church.[73] Cardinal Tomášek would remain an important supporter of the underground community in Slovakia and an important source of the intra-church legitimacy of the community. Tomášek's support was vital, especially since the Holy See did not lend any clear support to the demonstration.

The papacy did not get directly involved though, following the demonstration, the pope publicly prayed for the "Church in Czechoslovakia."[74] It was rather vaguely phrased, however. In fact, it may have been the case that public support of the underground Church community as such was not among the Vatican's priorities, especially at this time when the Vatican was clearly careful not to disrupt contacts with the Czechoslovak state, with which it was seeking to reach an agreement on the central position of the Bishop of Trnava.[75]

The underground community either read into the pope's symbolic gesture, seeing it as a clear sign of support, or overlooked its silence altogether. While it might have been a serious blow to the underground community's self-confidence several years ago, now they felt supported by the church thanks to Tomášek, but also by larger and larger segments of civic dissent. In other words, trust in and by the Catholic hierarchy continued to be crucial but was no longer a *conditio sine qua non* of the underground community's existence. Forthcoming events that lead to the abrupt end of the rule of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia further strengthened this self-understanding.

Culmination and Dwindling of Trust Amidst November Events

The first demonstrations began in Prague on 17 November, International Students' Day, which in 1989, was also the fiftieth anniversary of the Nazis' repression of Czech universities. On that day, a peaceful gathering organised by the Socialist Association of Youth turned into a demonstration for broader political change and was eventually violently suppressed by the police. In Bratislava, about 200 students demonstrated on Thursday 16 November, demanding a dialogue on problems in the educational system.[76] On 19 November, one day after individual groups of Slovak civic dissent and intellectuals had discussed the possibilities of civic mobilisation, about 500 people met and formed a broad civic movement VPN – Verejnosť proti násiliu (Public Against Violence), which became the Slovak counterpart of the OF – Občianske fórum (Civic Forum), simultaneously established in

73 Ohlasy zahraničnej tlače na Bratislavský Veľký piatok. In *Hlas Ameriky*, 9 April 1988, quoted in: KOREC, Ján Chryzostom. *Bratislavský Veľký piatok 25. marec 1988*. Bratislava : Lúč, 2008, pp. 245.
74 Ohlasy zahraničnej tlače, pp. 243–246.
75 PEŠEK – BARNOVSKÝ 2016, pp. 136–139.
76 HENDERSON, Karen. *Slovakia. The Escape from Invisibility*. London; New York : Routledge, 2002, p. 29. See e. g. HOMZA, Martin – MIKOVÁ, Mária – NOVOTNÝ, Milan. *Študentský prológ k Nežnej revolúcii. Bratislava 16. november 1989*. Budmerice : Slovenské dejiny, o. z., 2019.

Prague.[77] By Monday, 20 November, the public protest had grown enormously, spilling into the Bratislava theatres where actors went on strike. Students were beginning to hold assemblies and by the next day, the unrest had spread all over Slovakia to Košice, Banská Bystrica, Žilina, Zvolen, Trnava and Martin.[78]

Initially, Catholic activists did not join the civic activists. In the build-up to the November 1989 strikes, the Czech and Slovak hierarchy were in Rome with a large number of pilgrims celebrating the canonisation of St. Agnes of Bohemia. On the 17th of November, 1989, when the first student demonstrations in Prague began, hundreds of leading Czech and Slovak Catholics were at St. Peter's in Vatican square rather than in November squares in Czechoslovakia. Archbishop Sokol, the newly appointed leader of the Slovak ecclesiastical province, also attended the ceremony. Bishop Korec was also present, already wearing the insignia of a bishop. It was highly probable that his appointment to one of the dioceses in Slovakia—most likely Nitra—was approaching.

Some of the Catholic activists who were not in Rome kept to church spaces. For instance, those from the Trnava pilgrimage in mid-November gathered at the traditional annual Trnava Novena, a local Marian feast, and prayed for the release of detained Catholic and civic activists.[79]

Eventually, it was individuals from the hierarchy who had the greatest impact on encouraging the involvement of Catholics into the protest. The leading figure from the Catholic hierarchy was initially Cardinal Tomášek, who joined in the bottom-up mobilisation of support for radical change. On the day of his return from Rome, he published a declaration to "All people of Czechoslovakia", encouraging Catholics not to stand aside during protest. "In this fateful hour of our history", appealed Tomášek, none of you should stand aside. "Let's raise our voice again, in unity with other citizens of our country, Czechs and Slovaks and with members of minorities, believers and non-believers. The right to religious freedom cannot be severed from other democratic rights. Freedom is inseparable,"[80] he said. Tomášek also advocated for end of the one-party power monopoly. Archbishop Sokol, in contrast, was much more careful not to move away from the recently achieved co-operation with the socialist state too quickly.

Archbishop Sokol sent a letter to all ordinaries and bishops in Slovakia on the same day as Tomášek. In it, he announced that "since our Catholic Church is part of society, which is undergoing the process of democratisation, we have to take an official stance." By this time, Sokol was already under pressure from inside the Church in Slovakia. A leading group of young seminarians (candidates for priesthood) joined the students in gathering at the statue of 18th century nationalist poet Ján Hollý and signing national songs.[81]

They were led by Alojz Martinec, one of the leading figures of the ZKD-PIT, a well-known nationalist historian who would later become one of the central advocates for placing

77 See e.g. ANTALOVÁ, Ingrid (ed.) *Verejnosť proti násiliu, 1989–1991, Svedectvá a dokumnety*. Bratislava : Nadácia Milana Šimečku, 1998; ANTALOVÁ, Ingrid (ed.) *Verejnosť proti násiliu, Občianske fórum, Svedectvá*. Bratislava : Nadácia Milana Šimečku, 1999.
78 *Smena*, 22 November 1989, p. 4.
79 Trnavská Novéna. In *Náboženstvo* a *súčasnosť*, 1989, No. 4, pp. 10–11.
80 Všetkému ľudu Československa, quoted in: ŠIMULČÍK, Ján (ed.) *Katolícka cirkev a nežná revolúcia 1989*. Prešov : Vydavateľstvo Michala Vaška, 1999, pp. 39–40.
81 Stanovisko študentov rímskokatolíckej cyrilometodskej bohosloveckej fakulty v Bratislave, Príloha A8, quoted in: ŠIMULČÍK 1999, pp. 50–51.

the Church at the centre of national history.[82] On the next day, 22 November, Sokol issued a declaration that supported the call to respect human rights, but did not explicitly reject the Communist Party, "I join the people of Czechoslovakia and many leading functionaries in this country and the whole world, in protest against this brutal violence, trampling on human dignity and violation of basic human rights. I hope that there will be people democratically elected." Importantly, however, Sokol did not call on Catholics to mobilise. Instead, he called on them to "pray so that violence would stop."[83] It took almost another week for Sokol to call for grassroots Catholic organisation.

The very fact that these Bishops were appointed by John Paul II was already a good starting point as far as trust from Catholic activists was concerned. If they did not use this initial capital in support of the underground Church and the wake of its suppression, the demonstrations were their second chance.

Sokol's reaction was vital to the reinforcement of this rudimentary trust. In the meantime, some Catholics had picked up where they left off during the Prague Spring in 1968. They again began to call for swift integration of the underground Church leaders into the structures of the official Church. Jukl returned to a strategy rehearsed in 1968 and called for removal of ZKD-PIT members from leadership positions in Church administration and an end to the ZKD-PIT influence in the *Katolícke noviny*.[84] This did not come as quickly as the underground Church had expected. These Catholics, who in the months preceding November 1989 struggled to understand the hierarchy's lack of interest in the underground Church, were now happy to see Sokol's support of the VPN. They probably saw it as an indication of broader support of bottom-up mobilisation by the Catholic Church hierarchy. As Jukl wrote for *Katolícky mesačník*, "We abound with gratitude and admiration for our university students and actors who triggered this chain reaction. But we are even more enthusiastic and proud of the reaction of our Church dignitaries who reacted promptly, courageously and wisely to the situation."[85] Jukl's demand for the removal of the ZKD-PIT functionaries was partially fulfilled in December at the first meeting at the Trnava Archbishopric Office.

In the meantime, members of the underground Church began to mobilise in support of the Czech and Slovak students. In over 14 declarations, the first of which appeared on 23 November 1989, groups that had previously mobilised within the underground Church began to demand changes,[86] including autonomy of the Church hierarchy and severing ties with the state. They supported the demands of the Czech and Slovak students and added some of their own.

Three themes were paramount. First, the activists repeated some of the demands voiced in 1988, including an end to "discrimination against believers at schools, cultural institutions,

82 Bohoslovci sa pridali k štrajkujúcim študentom 21. Novembra, SITA Slovenská tlačová agentúra (SITA Slovak news agency), 20 November 2013 http://www.webnoviny.sk/ostatne/clanok/759196-bohoslovci-sa-pridali-k-strajkujucim-studentom-21-novembra/ (last accessed 11 September 2014).
83 Ľuďom dobrej vôle na Slovensku, quoted in: ŠIMULČÍK 1999, p. 24.
84 JUKL, Vladimír. Drahí čitatelia, bratia a sestry v Kristu. In *Katolícky mesačník*, 1989, Vol. 2, No. 12, p. 4.
85 JUKL 1989, p. 4.
86 My, veriace rodiny, Príloha A5, p. 46; Prehlásenie katolickych laikov, Príloha A6, p. 47; Stanovisko študentov Rímskokatolíckej cyrilometodskej bohosloveckej fakulty v Bratislave, Príloha A8, pp. 50–51; Výzva Hnutia rodín na Slovensku, Príloha A9, p. 52; Milí priatelia, Príloha A11, p. 54–55; Vyhlásenie gréckokatolíckych duchovných, Príloha A12, p. 56; Slovo veriacich ku svojim kňazom, Príloha A13, p. 57; Stanovisko kňazov Nitrianskej diecézy, p. 59. All quoted in: ŠIMULČÍK 1999 (missing pagination).

in factories and scientific institutions", allowing the establishment of an independent association of party members including as well those who do not belong to the party, an end to censorship and a greater allowance of religious publications.[87]

Second, they repeated their demand for "moral renewal." The Movement of Christian Families challenged the dominance of the "atheist worldview" in culture and demanded an "adequate" role for religions and the abolishment of, in their eyes, "demoralising and destructive sexual education."[88] A group of seminarians condemned the current political system as totalitarian and "leading to the deformation of true values."[89] Implicit in these demands was the basic claim that any genuinely "moral" system had to respect Catholic values. These Catholics, however, did not present the Catholic Church as a strong leader in the cause of this moral renewal. In fact, they saw the current state of the Church as a symptom of broader moral "decay."[90]

Therefore, the activists demanded an end to the close co-operation between Church and state. Emboldened by the society-wide mobilisation, Catholic campaigners criticised the Church's involvement with the state. It may well be that the events of November 1989 allowed these Catholics to voice the criticism they did not dare to say publicly before November in fear of repression not only from the state, but also from the Church hierarchy. An activist priest, Anton Srholec, saw 1989 as the beginning of the Church's internal renewal as well as a start to its work renewing society at large. The Church was, in his view "facing a difficult task; to genuinely atone, overcome fear, sympathise with the poor and un-free nation. We should become the conscience of the nation, spokesperson of her demands in…service, to make clear that we are not after money and prestige."[91] The Movement of Christian Families, which since 1985 had been the fastest growing group within the underground community, demanded that the leaders of the Church begin to "publicly defend the interests of believers and other citizens and not let them be abused by the authorities of the state." They also rejected ZKD-PIT priests as "representatives of the Church." In addition, they protested the official labelling of the underground Church as an heir to a "clerical-fascist" state.[92] "We have our own views", they asserted, which have "matured under the conditions of real socialism and we reject the view that they had been forced upon us by émigrés." The Lay Apostolate around Mikloško and Jukl also criticised current Church policies, claiming that a "state that constantly interferes with the internal matters of the Church is not a democratic state."[93] All these declarations demanded the separation of the Church from state control. It even seemed initially that some in the official hierarchy might eventually abandon support for the state and join in with society.

Meanwhile, the head of Slovak Province, Archbishop Sokol, caught up with this bottom-up mobilisation. Following the first common negotiations between the state and members of Public Against Violence, Sokol, as the head of the Slovak province, publicly supported the VPN and called on all Catholics to join this movement.[94] By this time, the VPN had

87 My, veriace rodiny, p. 46.
88 Výzva Hnutia rodín, p. 52.
89 Stanovisko študentov, pp. 50–51.
90 Stanovisko študentov, pp. 50–51; Slovo veriacich, p. 57.
91 SRHOLEC, Anton. Radosť a nádej, Konkrétna situacia Cirkvi v Československu. In *Rodinné spoločenstvo*, 1989, No. 4, p. 10.
92 My, veriace rodiny, p. 46.
93 Prehlásenie katolickych, p. 47.
94 Ľuďom dobrej vôle, p. 26.

been joined by Čarnogurský, however, the rest of the hierarchy did not follow Sokol's lead yet and did not show any signs of abandoning their recently inaugurated state-oriented cultural nationalism. At the end of November 1989, the Slovak hierarchy collectively published a letter to all believers in which it announced the beginning of the "Year of Faith", connecting it to the 370th anniversary of the death of three Catholic "martyrs of Košice" who died during the Reformation. According to the Slovak hierarchy, the message of the story of these martyrs for Catholics was to stay away from politics. As the hierarchy put it, the martyrs were "victims of the confrontation between different confessions, which were marked by different political interests."[95] Rather than encouraging societal engagement, they called on Catholics to focus on faith. Indeed, the only priest present on the main November stage at the Slovak National Uprising Square in Bratislava was Srholec, a man who after 1989 would be suspended from his service for unorthodox views. In the meantime, Čarnogurský came to the centre stage of the demonstrations. Imprisonment helped him gain the large following necessary for his long-term goal of establishing a Christian political movement. He was now a "martyr", a suitable leader for the Catholic nationalists but also more broadly, for Slovak society.

The fact that Sokol, the leading Church dignitary, supported democratic mobilisation did not mean that the hierarchy would embrace the underground Church wholeheartedly. Archbishop Sokol himself reacted to the public disclosure of secretly ordained priests with restraint.[96] Indeed, to the great disappointment of some former underground clergy, those loyal to the ZKD-PIT were handled with "kid gloves" while underground priests came under close scrutiny because of fear from "liberal" elements within the Church.[97] Curiously, this conservatism was directly supported from the Vatican, which sought to contain possible liberal influence from former underground churches. Moreover, the pope saw the issue of purges and debates about collaboration as highly divisive and was determined to prevent any separation by treading carefully with regard to ZKD-PIT members.[98]

Certainly, representatives of the underground Church wanted something more radical. Jukl argued that "the nation is loyal to the Holy Father…[but ZKD-] PIT members are a disgrace to the Slovak nation."[99] Jukl's plea was based on the fact that even if the [ZKD-] PIT were officially abolished by the Vatican, its leading members would retain their positions.[100] Bishop Sokol answered by questioning Jukl's legitimacy as a priest—because of his secret ordination.[101] On December 11, 1989, the communist-controlled ZKD-PIT was disbanded, alongside its counterparts in the region. Overall, the Catholic Church would come out of the November events as a symbol of change and a vehicle of post-socialist national identity.

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95 Pastiersky List Zboru Ordinárov SSR z príležitosti roku viery, p. 1 (Personal archive of the author).
96 The Catholic hierarchy waited to be able to single out progressive elements within the underground Church community in Czechoslovakia. Given their shared ecclesiastical conservatism, most of the underground Church leaders in Slovakia accepted this new development.
97 Programové vyhlásenie kňazov Slovenska, quoted in: ŠIMULČÍK 1999, p. 28.
98 JORISSEN, Hans. Odmietnuté dedičstvo. Rímske „normy" v zaobchádzaní so skrytou cirkvou. In KOLLER, Erwin – KÜNG, Hans – KRIŽAN, Peter (eds.) *Zradené proroctvo. Československá podzemná cirkev medzi Vatikánom a komunizmom*. Prešov : Vydavateľstvo Michala Vaška, 2011, pp. 137–147; KONZAL, Jan. *Duch* a *nevěsta. Z dějin cirkevního podzemí ve 2. polovině 20. století.* Brno : Centrum pro stadium demokracie a kultury, 2010, pp. 66–82.
99 MORAVČÍK, Karol. Zápis-infromácia o stretnutí kňazov v Trnave dňa 4. 12. 1989. Quoted in: ŠIMULČÍK 1999, p. 74.
100 MORAVČÍK, Zápis-infromácia, p. 74.
101 MORAVČÍK, Zápis-infromácia, p. 74.

Conclusion

In late socialist Czechoslovakia, trust in and by Catholic hierarchy was a crucial source of intra-ecclesial legitimacy, self-confidence and an important part of self-definition for the underground Catholic activists assembled in the underground Church. After the conclusion of the Prague Spring, which brought an end to the only public cooperation among the members of the underground and the official Church, the Project of Council Renewal, this trust was only very slowly being reconstructed. For most of the 1970s, the underground Church was supressed and delegitimised, not only by the state—this was nothing new—but also devastatingly so by the Vatican, who ordered secretly ordained Bishops to cease their activities. The priority now, for both the Vatican and the Communist state, was rapprochement. The underground Church was perceived as a roadblock. This changed with the election of the Polish Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, who invited the underground Catholics back into the fold of officially recognised representatives of the Church in Slovakia. This gesture may not have been visible in the grand scheme of church politics, but it was crucial for the underground Catholics, delivering legitimacy and self-confidence. An important impetus was also the changed behaviour of some members of the hierarchy who espoused—at least partially—papal politics of memory and supported mobilisation around symbols (Our Lady of Seven Sorrows and Cyril and Methodius) and at spaces (pilgrimages) of national Catholicism. This did not translate directly into explicit support of the secret community. In other words, trust was one-sided matter only. Nevertheless, the underground Church continued to buttress its self-confidence with other sources, of both local and transnational origin. In the wake of the suppression of the underground Church, Czech Cardinal Tomášek, as well as civic dissent, figured as important sources of trust. Leading members of the Slovak hierarchy returned to the game during the events of November 1989 as the rule of the Communist party began crumbling. In particular, Archbishop Sokol lent his support to the demonstrators and worked to severe the ties of the Church with the Communist state. The ZKD-PIT lost its *raison d'être* shortly after the fall of the Communist Party, however, this severing of ties with the Communist state did not mean full trust in the underground Church. On the contrary, as it later became clear, for the hierarchy, the underground Church in its entirety had never played and would never play the same role as the hierarchy did for the underground Catholics. The hierarchy's subsequent dealings with the underground Church members—save the secretly ordained bishops and some clergy who joined the ranks of post-1989 hierarchy—revealed this to be a constant feature of intra-church life.

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FORUM HISTORIAE

State of Grace: A Probe into Understanding Democratic Trust and Legitimacy Through the Eyes of the VPN (The Public Against Violence)

Matej Ivančík

Abstract

IVANČÍK, Matej. State of Grace: A Probe into Understanding Democratic Trust and Legitimacy Through the Eyes of the VPN (The Public Against Violence).

Gaining trust, both domestically and internationally, became a self-evident mission for the protagonists of the 1989 democratic revolution, something ever-present within the new policies aimed at a political and economic transition. This held true in particular with the Czechoslovak case. Unlike the situation in Poland or Hungary, where the legitimacy of the political transition was framed by the so-called Round Table Talks, revolutionaries from the Civic Forum (Občanské forum or OF) and the Public Against Violence (Verejnosť proti násiliu or VPN) had to extract their legitimacy directly from the very event of the Velvet Revolution. This exposed the policies of the OF and VPN to a participatory scrutiny of sorts in an even more imminent manner. In order to gain trust, at best transferable to actual political results, i.e. winning an election, the proponents of the democratic revolution in Czechoslovakia engaged in both policies and politics which would create an environment most preferable for their goals. This text focuses on the political language of ethics and politics, totalitarianism and Europeanization, focusing mainly on strategies used by the VPN and seeks to understand how an environment focused on developing and gaining trust functioned in the Slovak case.

Keywords: legitimacy, trust, political languages, ethics and politics, democratic revolution, Public against Violence, Verejnosť proti násiliu

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Languages and Sources of Legitimacy and Trust: A Methodological Frame

When it comes to ethics, politics, totalitarianism and the return-to-Europe narrative, one must question the motivation behind use of such concepts. Surely they are general notions subject to democratic debate, yet the use of these terms by certain actors within the particular post-socialist structure is, first and foremost, to be understood as a tool or frame through which emerging political actors would legitimize their actions, in this way gaining trust.[1] This in turn allowed for promotion of a political and economic agenda, and at the same time, a challenge to political and ideological rivals. It would be a rather simplified understanding to view such a pursuit within a merely opportunist framework. Attempts at gaining trust and providing legitimacy played to

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1 The terms "trust" and "legitimacy" are used here with specific meanings. Legitimacy is not strictly understood as a legal term but rather refers to "justification". In the case of the protagonists of the 1989 democratic revolution, legitimacy was mainly drawn from the event of the revolution in the form of democratic participation of the people. Trust, on the other hand, is perceived as a more particular and rather political term. The VPN, as well as other groups, struggled for trust as a way to legitimize or justify their vision of the transformation of society. In other words, to form and retain legitimacy.

the very core of the post-socialist understanding of what type of society the emerging elites would be willing to invest in. In the history of democracy, the central problem concerning legitimacy and trust lies in acknowledging the gap, or rather the dynamic, between the two respective concepts. During the "state of grace" as Pierre Rosanvallon describes the brief period following the elections, legitimacy and trust merged into one.[2] Normally the gap between these two concepts is an inherent part of democracy according to Rosanvallon.[3] Such a state can be observed in a well-functioning, liberal democracy and is in itself, an element which allows us to interpret democracy in a dynamic manner. The question then is: how is the period from the outbreak of the democratic revolution to the elections in June 1990 perceived in society? It is my belief that the event of revolution provided its protagonists with the same, if not higher, level of legitimacy than elections would have in a liberal democratic regime.[4]

Support for such a statement relies on several assumptions. Firstly, the main actors of the democratic revolution—former dissidents—disposed of "symbolic capital", which the revolution only bolstered.[5] The idea behind this symbolic capital was one of a continuous and openly accentuated opposition to the Communist regime and the overwhelming presence of the party in both public and private life. When the Communist regime collapsed, as Jiří Suk revealed, the resulting power vacuum allowed the intellectuals to occupy a strategic position within a highly concentrated political space.[6] Such a situation does not normally occur during typical power transitions in liberal-democratic regimes.

Secondly, the former dissidents, intellectuals and other democratic protagonists exploited a situation which could be described as adherence to the most radical solution within the existing political realm, i.e. not a democratisation of the Communist regime but a democratic revolution. As Suk continues, the perestroika Communists, or reformists, operated from a much weaker position. Moreover, a similar argument was made by James Krapfl, who highlighted that the initial participatory outburst in regions, factories, schools, administrative offices, etc., eventually yielded in favour of an umbrella brand, the VPN.[7]

Furthermore, the period after the revolution to the June 1990 election saw a range of political hopefuls attempt to make a run at the VPN candidate list. In the Slovak case, this held true not only for the former 1968 reform Communists, but also the Democratic Socialists party and the Movement for Civic Freedom.[8] Yet the VPN movement's original success and political capital was also a strong reminder of its popular force, which became visible during the early period before the election. Although various actors sought to join the VPN, a great deal of individual adepts were refused.[9] It can be suggested that those

2 ROSANVALLON, Pierre. *Counter-Democracy: Politics in an Age of Distrust*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 4.
3 ROSANVALLON 2008, p. 4.
4 The role of democratic participation was reinforced through the unfolded absence of a stable institutional environment, caused to a major extent by the lack of a solid referential framework. This can be seen in the emergence of the role of parliament as well. GJURIČOVÁ, Adéla – ZAHRADNÍČEK, Tomáš. *Návrat parlamentu: Češi a Slováci ve Federálním shromáždění 1989 – 1992*. Praha : Argo – ÚSD AV ČR, 2018.
5 SUK, Jiří. *Labyrintem revoluce: Aktéři, zápletky a křižovatky jedné politické krize*. Praha : Prostor, 2020, p. 24.
6 SUK 2020, p. 24.
7 KRAPFL, James. *Revolúcia* s ľudskou *tvárou: Politika, kultúra a spoločenstvo v Československu po 17. Novembri 1989*. Bratislava : Kalligram, 2009, pp. 232–264.
8 Slovak National Archive (SNA), Bratislava, Public Against Violence II. section (f. VPN II.)., inventory number (inv.) 108, box (b.) 27 Secretariat.
9 SNA, f. VPN II., inv. 108, b. 27, Secretariat, Withdrawals and dismissals of candidates.

rejected applicants provided a prospect pool for other subjects' electorate. This is just a hypothesis, however.

When examining the legitimacy of post-socialist societies through the lens of an intellectual history enquiry, both content as well as the form of politics and policies carried out by key performers in the transformation deserve equal attention. In other words, both content and form are to be considered political language. Contemporary debates on the legitimacy of democratic—mainly western—societies since the late 1980s culminated at the turn of the 1980s and '90s.[10] In a way, post-socialist debates on democracy and democratisation can be understood as a mere continuation, or rather a by-product, of those western debates, which were heavily influenced by the relationship between morality and legality. When examined within a societal scope rather than merely a political one, we cannot differentiate between the two concepts.[11] In other words, as Jürgen Habermas put it, conventionally externalized law and morality are mutually complementary. Within this respective understanding, significant for every modern society, the post-socialist regimes were left to build their legitimacy on the mutual harmonisation of legal transformational objectives and a morally defined political practice[12]. Naturally, the historical and territorial experience of the developments of former socialist societies are not taken into account in this theoretical model. Thus, it is yet to be understood how respective experience influenced the processes of gaining trust for political subjects, parties and movements within an actual historical realm—mainly the event of democratic revolution and subsequent change of the regime.

The post-socialist democratic legitimacy building process worked on levels of continuity and discontinuity. The latter is to be understood as a break from the previous regime, or rather, a denouncement. All of the major political forces active in the emergence of the post-socialist political landscape, including the Communists, attempted some form of renouncement of the previous political practices, making their case for establishing a renewed trust within the new political realm. Continuity, the main subject of this analysis, offers a more structured ground for polemics. While the concept of democratic legitimacy is quite well-established among the discourse on democracy, the approach of intellectual history deems it to be of value when examining post-socialist societies' engagement with the concept of democratic transformation, which is a rather *longue dureé* concept. In essence, the period between the democratic revolution and the parliamentary elections in June 1990 witnessed some major legal changes that should be taken as illustrations of the stages of democratisation. However, historically speaking, the protagonists of those changes were far from sure that the process was ever guaranteed to materialize. In this way, let us drift from this teleological interpretation and—not solely for the purposes of this paper—put an emphasis instead on a particular political landscape within which subjects were actually driven to gain trust in order to legitimize the very notions they attempted to achieve.

10 BALL, Terrence – FARR, James – HANSON, Russell L. (eds.) *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1989.; HUNTINGTON, Samuel. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York : Simon & Schuster, 1996.

11 HABERMAS, Jürgen. *Diskursivní teorie liberální demokracie*. Praha : Karolinum, 2018, p. 99.

12 The terminological non-interchangeability of morality/morals and ethics is fully acknowledged, nonetheless a fluid line has been drawn between these concepts here as within contemporary political discourse; it could hardly be defined in a precise manner. Though, such a blurred line could actually justify usage of the terms more broadly.

Here, concepts of democratic legitimization and the acquisition of trust are understood as mutually entwined and inseparable.

According to Charles Tilly, democratisation understood as a partial integration of interpersonal trust networks into public politics entails a sort of twofold shift of trust. Firstly, "citizens trust the organization of consultation and protection sufficiently to wait out short-term losses of advantage instead of turning immediately to non-governmental means of regaining lost advantages".[13] This speaks exactly of the political void, an interregnum from the outbreak of the democratic revolution to the election in June 1990, which is actually recognised when analysing the mechanisms of democratic legitimisation and gaining trust. Tilly's concept of trust works on the combined principles of "bottom-up" and "top-down", stressing a necessary interaction between institutional framework and citizen participation. His second shift reinforces this principle, stating that "citizens build into risky, long-term enterprises the assumption that the government will endure and meet its commitments."[14] Similarly, in agreement with the first statement, faith in the government's endurance and satisfactory—though, not necessarily successful—results of its policies requires a measurable amount of trust, usually exhibited in the form of repeated election or the absence of civil disobedience.

Placing the understanding of democratisation together with trust networks, Tilly's argument provides a more detailed and thus more suitable concept of the relationship between democracy and trust.[15] This should be strongly underlined, as earlier transitological studies have suggested a rather essentialist connection between the two concepts. While one can agree with William Mishler and Richard Rose's claim that trust is particularly important for democratic governments because they cannot rely on coercion to the same extent as other regimes and because trust is essential to the representation relationship, it is far from settled to say, as they have, that:

> In the post-Communist systems of Eastern and Central Europe, excessive trust is not a concern. The immediate problem is overcoming the abiding cynicism and distrust which are the predictable legacy of Communist rule.[16]

In an audacious manner, it can be maintained that there is no particular reason based on empirical evidence that would suggest a general distrust of the Communist system as such, or for that matter, claim the opposite about the democratic system other than that of support for the VPN's revolutionary programme. More likely, citizens could ascribe affiliation to either regime based on a feeling of representation or perhaps on the regime leadership's ability to fulfil their pursuit of welfare. It is not the purpose of this paper, however, to contend that higher levels of trust were cast towards democratic regimes. Eventually, trust was directly expressed in the initial requirements of democratic revolutionaries, such as eliminating the Communist party's monopoly and introducing political plurality and basic civil liberties. It should rather be expressed as an implication that the ahistorical, post-dissident interpretations, which automatically accompany democracy building along with the mass support of citizens, should be omitted. Instead, researchers should identify different sources

13 TILLY, Charles. Trust and Rule. In *Theory and Society*, 2004, Vol. 33, No. 1, pp. 20–22.
14 TILLY 2004, p. 22.
15 TILLY 2004, p. 22.
16 MISHLER, William – ROSE, Richard. Trust, Distrust and Skepticism: Popular Evaluations of Civil and Political Institutions in Post-Communist Societies. In *The Journal of Politics*, 1997, Vol. 59, No. 2, p. 419.

of legitimisation of democratic transformation and trust amongst the post-socialist political actors in order to better understand the mechanisms and tools employed in attempts to gain political trust.

The aforementioned line of reasoning by Tilly emphasizes a restructuring of trust networks within the process of democratization. This approach suggests a dynamic period within which the structure of citizens' trust is being assigned to democratic institutions. This is why solely speaking of gaining support through an election process is insufficient. The question is: how can the subjects of this trust restructuring be analysed, and at the same time, from where did their legitimacy originate? Finally, once these matters are resolved, how did the source of such legitimacy influence the political environment within which the protagonists of democratic change materialised their policies and politics of gaining trust? In other words, what effect did the very nature of the democratic revolution have on its flag-bearers in terms of envisioning, contemplating and materializing their policies and politics of gaining trust?

Although a teleological understanding of the push towards an established democratic regime cannot be assumed, what actually can be observed quite clearly are the political languages[17] employed by the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence, notwithstanding other actors, articulated within the post-revolutionary discourse in which a focused endeavour towards democratization can be traced. For this matter, the concepts of morality or ethics and politics, totalitarianism and the return-to-Europe narrative, or Europeanisation, have been selected for analysis. More precisely, these will be examined as political languages utilized by VPN as political tools to legitimize the very actors employing them within the emerging political landscape. In doing so, they engaged in pursuing trust transferable to election gains. The aim of my analysis is twofold. First, focusing on the VPN's active employment and utilisation of particular policies. Second, drawing attention to the VPN's peculiar understanding of politics in terms of apolitical concepts—promoting moral values and ethics as primary guiding principles and denying the usefulness and legitimacy of institutionalised politics exercised through political parties and organisations. For this reason, both archival materials as well as the articles produced in the VPN's newspaper *Verejnosť* are examined, in addition to other media and publications.

When considering a study of political languages employed by the VPN, I must define how the landscape they were produced in was comprehended.

The most striking aspect of this environment is actually the realm created by the Czecho-Slovak democratic revolution in 1989. James Mark deems the imagery of the falling of the Berlin wall as a symbol that actually was not ingrained in the East-Central European collective

17 The concept of "political language" is understood here as it was formulated by intellectual historian from the Cambridge historiographical school of political thought or intellectual history John Pocock. Pocock considers political language as a form of discourse, a stable set of idioms or conventions that a historian should understand as source material, not a mere reflection of historical context. One should see political languages as existent within their multitude. Furthermore, the user and recipient of political language perceives historical reality through these societal denominators. They are thus a vital part of understanding the historical phenomena they represent. Moreover, such an approach allows us to observe a multitude of meanings within the respective political language since they can reflect more than one subject's interpretation of the historical situation. See RICHTER, Melvin. Reconstructing the History of Political Languages: Pocock, Skinner and the Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. In *History and Theory*, 1990, Vol. 29, No. 1, pp. 38–70; POCOCK, John. *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2009, cited in: KOPEČEK, Michal. *Hledání ztraceného smyslu revoluce: Zrod a počátky marxistického revizionizmu ve střední Evropě 1953–1960*. Praha : Argo, 2009, pp. 32–34.

remembrance due to the very nature of the "negotiated revolutions", mainly embraced by Poland and Hungary and to a considerably lesser extent by Czechoslovakia in later days as well.[18] As Adam Michnik put it, the non-violent nature, the negotiations and the willingness to embrace the Round Table talks as part of the foundational myth were to be used in building the post-Communist system.[19] In Czechoslovakia, however, Round Table talks would not occur until the outbreak of revolution on November 17, 1989, delivering a higher ground to the protestors. Within this understanding, the rather loosely institutionalized talks were more of a vehicle for the actual defeat of the regime. Though possibly a result of a mere chronological lag in outcome, it could be argued that such negotiations had in fact weaponized the collective action, creating a stronger potential for legitimacy.

Michal Kopeček highlights that the revolutions of 1989 in East-Central Europe were marked by a re-mythologized national pathos where historical changes were represented by a national[20] struggle for liberation; the nation stood as one and swept away Communism.[21] While this imagery might hold true for the East-Central Europe revolutions in general, it definitely bears importance in the case of Czechoslovakia. Here, people could actually see signs of democratic transformation as being unfurled directly by the respective actions of the population.[22] James Krapfl claims that the most critical element of the Czechoslovak revolution was the aspect of participation.[23] Although, one can argue that if this were the case in the actual toppling of the Communist regime, there is an undeniable understanding of the people as subjects of the revolutionary movement, and therefore expected legitimacy.

Similarly, Jeffrey Isaac highlights the participatory aspect of the 1989 revolutions.[24] Though he does not claim that personal investment played a considerably bigger role than the liberal transformations, he certainly attributes a relevance to the phenomenon of democratic participation. Isaac's interpretation is highly valuable here, since it draws attention to the dynamic between the two meanings of 1989.

To say the least, there is strong evidence that the participatory democratic imagination occurred as a dominant force that shaped the development of the Czechoslovak internal political realm. It is within this frame that we as researchers must investigate the variety of political languages that left their mark on the developments in Czechoslovakia after the 1989 revolution. This analysis offers a more long-term insight into the challenges, as well as their respective historical forms, that emerged as a result of the dynamic between the rather elitist, liberal understanding of the revolution and the more popular participatory one.

Pierre Rosanvallon's premise that citizenship is not merely a form of belonging but rather a form of social power[25] properly captures the tone of the revolutionary outburst of 1989

18 MARK, James. *The Unfinished Revolution*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010, pp. 2–3.
19 MARK 2010, p. 2.
20 The expression "national" is not conceived in terms of ethno-nationalism, but rather in a more patriotic or com munitarian manner; as an adjective of a collective adherence to a certain idea of the past.
21 KOPEČEK, Michal. Human Rights Facing a National Past. In *Geschichte und Geselschaft*, 2012, Vol. 38, No. 4, p. 29.
22 It is in no way suggested that Poland or Hungary do not embody such cases. The situation in Czechoslovakia, however, brought a more dynamic shift from a substantially less liberalized environment, precisely thanks to popular pressure.
23 KRAPFL 2009, pp. 19–25.
24 ISAAC, Jeffrey C. The Meanings of 1989. In *Social Research*, 1996, Vol. 63, No. 2, p. 294.
25 ROSANVALLON, Pierre. Intellectual History and Democracy: An Interview with Pierre Rosanvallon. In *Journal of History of Ideas*, 2007, Vol. 68, No. 4, p. 706.

Czechoslovakia. His thoughts strongly agree with Krapfl's well-documented emphasis on the democratic citizenry participatory aspect of the so-called Velvet Revolution as being considerably decisive.[26] Even if it might be assumed that international, economic or political factors contributed substantially to the regime change, the social power, as Rosanvallon put it, which endured during and beyond the period of crowded squares, cannot be ignored.

Pierre Rosanvallon expounds upon his ideas into a system of understanding democracy in its complexity by maintaining the notion of a dynamic relationship between two kinds of distrust: liberal and democratic.[27] Social power accumulated as a result of the democratic revolution could simply not disappear afterwards. Instead, it was dispersed into a variety of understandings of what the democratic change could mean for citizens and/or their political or cultural organizations. These understandings are traceable within the discourse articulated by the political languages of the time, as mentioned above. The VPN leadership, then, had to communicate political interests through, by or against the very political languages presented in the emerging political landscape of the Czecho-Slovak realm, the Slovak domain in particular.

Form and Content of Gaining Trust in the VPN

As stated in the introduction, not only actual policies but also the form, or rather the style, of politics of the VPN will be examined as a political language in itself. In this manner, the interwoven morality, ethics and politics is analysed, from both discussions and presentations of the VPN. Such an entwinement was built on the previous dissident discourses on human rights, politics and democracy.

The importance of the dynamics between morality, ethics and politics was mainly seen in lively internal debates, articles, exhibitions and even in the political programme objectives for the 1990 elections. Their purpose resided in creating a complementary, yet very active, instrument of persuasion mechanisms for gaining trust, hopefully transferable to electoral gain.

On 5-6 April, Bratislava castle held an exhibition combined with a conference, all under the banner of "Ethics and Politics. Art against Totalitarianism". The event was organized by the VPN with the Slovak Ministry of Culture, the Austrian Education and Research Ministry and the Austrian Institute for Humanities. It brought together a plethora of international figures, such as György Konrád, Adam Michnik, Péter Kende, Jacques Rupnik, Pavel Tigrid and many others, with local intelligentsia active within the VPN ranks such as Miroslav Kusý, Ladislav Snopko and Martin Bútora, among others. Most of the contributions dealt with the concept of the relationships between power, politics, democracy, ethics, morality, legality and the role of intellectuals in the transformation process. Regardless of the ubiquitous anti-totalitarian and anti-communist vocabulary employed by the vast majority of contributors,[28] what immediately stands out is an ac-

26 KRAPFL 2009, pp. 19–25.
27 ROSANVALLON 2008, pp. 6–8.
28 HUDEK, Adam. Twenty Years Wasted? Constructing a Narrative of 1989 in Slovakia. In HUDEK, Adam et al. *Overcoming the old borders: Beyond the Paradigm of Slovak National History*. Bratislava : Institute of History, Slovak Academy of Sciences in Prodama, 2013, p. 170.

centuated endeavour to justify the VPN style of politics as the righteous one. Consider the following statement by Miroslav Kusý:

> For the very reason that we have experienced racism, nationalism, and socialism as political ideologies, we are now returning to such an understanding of politics, which positions it at the same level as public service—very similar to communal service. This does not mean de-honestation of politics, this is just a natural defence mechanism of the public.[29]

Péter Kende even defined their legitimacy through the relationship between ethics and politics.[30] Anti-politics was an established style of practising politics and Slovakia was no exception. It should be acknowledged, though, that this intellectual phenomenon is a powerful tool in gaining trust. Within the post-dissident milieu, the understanding of Communism as a direct embodiment of party politics could be seen as something of a given. The remaining majority of the population, however, could have easily held differing views and instead of liberal democratic replacement, may have strived for a more direct participatory involvement.

It is no way suggested that the vision of the VPN directly and willingly fought democratic participation, nor should it be accused of at least plotting such a scheme. Internal debates as well as the subsequent political programme objectives of the VPN simply show its liking for anti-politics, moral politics or ethical pronouncements of politics and, at the same time, the VPN's willingness to transform these views in an actual political tool for gaining trust. This is very clearly demonstrated by a great deal of the reactions to the aforementioned symposium on ethics and politics. The Coordination Centre of the VPN dedicated quite a substantial internal discussion to such responses in which many aspects were tackled. For instance, Péter Kende's contribution was criticized by Ľubomír Feldek for actually recognizing politics and ethics as two divergent concepts.[31]

Other examples of insisting on a peculiar interpretation of politics as an ethical public service are seen in the concept of "internal totalitarianism" as advocated by Adam Michnik, or as put by Martin Milan Šimečka, "totalitarianism in us".[32] Consequently, the debate continued by tackling the issue of totalitarianism. Fedor Gál, a main protagonist in the VPN movement, suggested that people corrupted by totalitarianism are not totalitarianism themselves, their behaviour was merely a deteriorated reaction to the long-term frustration of unfulfilled needs. The implication of his opinion unfolded a sort of practical conclusion; "Every revolution consists of two phases: the struggle for victory and the struggle for power. The latter ought to be omitted."[33] Instead of understanding this as a solely ethical position—however honest it may have been—such a worldview needs to be included within a general description of the VPN as a movement

29 KUSÝ, Miroslav. Etika a politika ako praktizovaná mravnosť. In *Etika a politika: Umenie proti totalite*. Bratislava : Slovenská národná galéria, 1990, p. 35.
30 KENDE, Péter. Cesta k slobodnému životu. In *Etika a politika: Umenie proti toalite*. Bratislava : Slovenská národná galéria, 1990, pp. 28–29.
31 SNA, f. VPN II., inv. 117b, b. 33. Secretariat, 5 April 1990, minutes from the Ethics and Politics symposium. This divergence was, according to Ľubomír Feldek, mentioned in an informal discussion. It is clear from the document, though, that Feldek was not satisfied with such an interpretation.
32 SNA, f. VPN II., inv. 117b, b. 33, Secretariat, 5 April 1990, minutes from the Ethics and Politics symposium. Šimečka is mentioned in the document as Milan. It is, however, probably his son, Martin Milan Šimečka.
33 SNA, f. VPN II., inv. 117b, b. 33, Secretariat, 5 April 1990, minutes from the Ethics and Politics symposium.

that did not seek power as an end itself, but rather a means to achieve a certain desirable outcome beneficial for democratic transformation. Overall, Gál's very notion is informed by understanding politics through the lens of anti-politics. In addition, it is tempting to assume that the very fact the relationship between politics and ethics had been exposed as a matter for discussion could itself serve political purposes. Although, it also poses a question as to what extent this idea was reflected by the general public in the same manner.[34]

As for the results of the symposium, Martin Milan Šimečka came to the conclusion that it did not resolve the question of the interrelation of politics and ethics. However, the VPN's election programme objectives were already published and the document bore witness to both the ambiguity as well as intertwinement of politics and ethics. The movement explicitly promoted the term "new politics" (nové politikum), which encompassed the very relationship of the issues as embodied by the VPN's endeavours. The VPN dubbed itself a "movement which is, thanks to its ethos, new and unique and thus hard to define as a subject within our society."[35] It struggled to pursue its civil society ethos, while at the same time aspiring to victory in the upcoming political contest. Essentially, its (un)pragmatic hesitancy to resolutely claim to be either a political or civil society subject reinforced the need to define itself as a "new politics" subject. As the programme stated, the movement "was born as a political necessity in the sense of an awakened citizenry."[36]

This constant need for justification has to be considered in a more excessive frame, though. Far from being a mere internal matter, it developed into a constitutive discourse with a direct political impact. The combination of the internal need to understand its own role on one hand, and the external environment of an ever more politically emergent arena on the other produced or reinforced new forms of languages loaded with ideological constructs, one being the label "totalitarianism". While acknowledging the term's usage drew legitimacy from late socialist dissident discourse, one must not exclude the differences in its post-socialist usage. Here, Adam Michnik's influence played a considerable role, as will be elaborated below. However, the post-1989 usage of totalitarianism as a political language must be perceived within an environment of liberal distrust[37] as was posed by Pierre Rosanvallon. Simply put, the major shift resided in the fact that the former dissident discourse gained an upper hand precisely because of the democratic legitimacy acquired as a result of the regime change.

The Czechoslovak case, with an actual democratic participatory revolution—unlike the Hungarian or Polish instances—reinforced this aspect substantially. Thus, the period after November 1989 saw a population even more susceptible to democratic participation, and for that matter, its negation. The Slovak case in particular forced the VPN to

34 The newspapers of the VPN, *Verejnosť*, wrote about the exhibition of April 10, though focusing mostly on the artistic aspect. LESNÁ, Ľuba. Proti totalite umenia. In *Verejnosť*, 10 April 1990, p. 7.
35 SNA, f. VPN II., inv. 105, b. 24, Secretariat, Fedor Gál – "Predstava o krajine", 30 January 1990.
36 SNA, f. VPN II., inv. 105, b. 24, Secretariat, Fedor Gál – "Predstava o krajine", 30 January 1990.
37 KOPEČEK, Michal. From Narrating Dissidence to Post-Dissident Narratives of Democracy: Antitoalitarianism, Politics of Memory and Culture Wars in East-Central Europe 1970s–2000s. In BARŠA, Pavel – HESOVÁ, Zora – SLAČÁLEK, Ondřej (eds.) *Central European Culture Wars: Beyond Post-Communism and Populism*. Praha : Vydavatelství Filozofické fakulty Univerzity Karlovy, 2021, pp. 28–83. (In press. Cited with kind permission from the author).

struggle for legitimacy against other forms of collective force, namely those employed by the ethno-nationalist imagination. Within this frame, VPN protagonists utilized the political language of anti-totalitarianism against subjects who bore the nationalist flag. Here, a term coined by Michal Kopeček, "usable totalitarianism", is wholly accurate. According to him, it means to emphasize the democratic credentials of the post-socialist regime—and its proponents (M. I.)—and foster a sense of belonging.[38] This sense of belonging entwines with Rosanvallon's understanding of liberal distrust. The term's use, however, was subject to specific national contexts. The VPN employed it as tool against the ever more present nationalist discourse, attacking the "privatization" of the meaning of the revolution. On the other side, the situation in the Czech Republic used this style of discourse against the Communist threat, real or imagined.[39] In Slovakia, a nationalist agenda had gradually emerged and the VPN protagonists acknowledged the political threat in its protraction, as articulated by the ever louder Slovak National Party (SNS) and organizations such as Matica slovenská and Štúrova spoločnosť.

The particular usage by the VPN is evidenced in various examples. What is most striking, however, is the attempt to interpret the democratic revolution itself through the language of usable totalitarianism. As Fedor Gál put it:

> I am convinced that the credentials of civic initiatives in Czechoslovakia reside in the fact that they removed the fear of the Communist party's totalitarianism from people. […] The speed with which, and many times the way itself in which the freed space became occupied, brought a new role the (civic – M.I.) initiatives have to face; to remove the fear from people themselves. Should they succeed, the free elections cannot turn out differently than in a victorious manner. The public will become the victor.[40]

Internal debates on the style of politics the VPN should employ continued throughout the months before the elections in June. The concept of totalitarianism-in-us was also articulated at the symposium *Ethics and Politics* by Adam Michnik: "Chauvinism represents a perverse response to the feeling of a lack of national identity. The biggest threat is not Communism or the Soviet Union, but rather ourselves".[41] Robert Brier contends that Michnik's understanding of totalitarianism played a vital role in the term's transnational late socialist and post-socialist acceptance.[42] Perhaps it can be assumed that through Havel and subsequently through such events as the *Ethics and Politics* symposium, it reached the broader Slovak intellectual milieu too. However, further research here is required. It is yet important to focus on the Slovak political environment where the notion of totalitarianism-in-us, could thrive.[43]

Moreover, usable totalitarianism came knocking when the VPN—and OF—had to deal with accusations of power-grabbing structures not substantially different from

38 KOPEČEK, Michal. Czech Republic: From the Politics of History to Memory as Political Language. In *Cultures of History Forum,* 02. December 2013, https://www.cultures-of-history.uni-jena.de/debates/from-the-politics-of-history-to-memory-as-political-language, DOI: 10.25626/0021.
39 KOPEČEK 2013.
40 SNA, f. VPN II., inv. 105, b. 24, Secretariat, Fedor Gál – "Vízia našej cesty", 16 January 1990.
41 SNA, f. VPN II., inv. 117b, b. 33. Secretariat, 4 April 1990, minutes from the Ethics and Politics symposium.
42 BRIER, Robert. Adam Michnik's Understanding of Totalitarianism and the West European Left: A Historical and Transnational Approach to Dissident Political Thought. In *East European Politics and Societies*, 2011, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 199–201.
43 Within this environment, Michnik's thought also played an important role in understanding national chauvinism as totalitarianism, an idea which particularly struck Martin Milan Šimečka. See, SNA, f. VPN II., inv. 117b, b. 33, Secretariat, 4 April 1990, minutes from the Ethics and Politics symposium.

the Communists. The awareness of such a problem is supported by both an appeal to the movements' commitment to ethical principles,[44] and later on, by simply condemning those who "stood in the way of transformation."[45] Both attempts shared a common denominator; totalitarianism in us. In the former, Petr Pithart publicly denounced power-grabbing attempts within the OF and VPN ranks, mainly municipal and those within factories saying, "We have to defend against the totalitarianism—the one which stands against ourselves as well as the one which, I am not happy to say it, could stem from us."[46] When assembling a list of candidates before the elections, this became a problem for the Coordination Centre of the VPN. They had to openly admit that not all the candidates fulfilled the requirements for the public image of the movement.

The VPN disposed of a guideline which provided essential recommendations and constraints which the candidates had to observe.[47] Furthermore, the VPN's Coordination Committee struggled with its own internal democratic structure, which eventually pushed it into opting for an autonomous model for the selection of candidates. The definitive solution before the June 1990 elections favoured a method where the Coordination Committee suggested a candidate, usually a recognizable figure, and then the regional VPN representatives would approve them.[48] In addition, the Coordination Committee was confronted by a number of civil letters directly denouncing particular VPN candidates. Often the objection had to do with a candidate's alleged Communist past, such as one from the town of Turčianske Teplice.[49]

Coordination Committee member Martin Milan Šimečka emphasized the high moral expectations VPN candidates had to meet. The majority of nominees should have consisted of politically and professionally moulded personalities who had lived up to the moral authority amassed during the fight against the totalitarian system, before or during the revolution.[50] Such a wording provided operating space for even former Communists who happened to recognize either the righteousness or necessity of the democratic revolution. Needless to say, it allowed the VPN to promote a non-violent transition of power and include even former opponents if they expressed like-mindedness in the democratic transformation.[51] The ambiguity of the VPN's indecision to become either a civil movement or a political party was also considered to be a political problem after the elections. There were two possible outcomes considered, either a loss of popularity or loss of principles.[52] One must, however, perceive this dichotomy as an impasse of the very post-dissident intellectual understanding of the political development. In other words, it was all a result of the failure to resolve the internal debate on the interrelation of politics and ethics.

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44 SNA, f. VPN II. oddelenie, inv. 105, b. 24, Petr Pithart – "Milí priatelia", January 1990.
45 Civil initiative VPN, Častkovce, Trápi nás. In, *Verejnosť*, 10 April 1990, p. 2. One of the results of the previous totalitarianism employed by the Communist regime was civil apathy. In combination with mistrust towards VPN protagonists, this was considered by the initiative as an obstacle on the way to a better society, "My God, people, get rid of the fear, open your gates to others, do not block our revolutionary road."
46 SNA, f. VPN II., inv. 117b, b. 33. Secretariat, Petr Pithart – "Milí priatelia", January, 1990.
47 SNA, f. VPN II., inv. 109, b. 28. Secretariat, A Candidate's Guide, 1990.
48 SNA, f. VPN II., inv. 103, b. 23. Secretariat, Minutes from the Political Club, 4 March 1990.
49 SNA, f. VPN II., inv. 108, b. 27. Secretariat, Letters, Turčianske Teplice, 26 May 1990.
50 SNA, f. VPN II., inv. 103, b. 23. Secretariat, Minutes from the Political Club, 9 March 1990.
51 The ubiquity of the Central European post-socialist anti-Communism present in Czech Republic, Poland or Hungary was rather marginal in Slovakia.
52 SNA, f. VPN II., inv. 105, b. 24. Secretariat, 26 July 1990, minutes.

Fedor Gál even expressed doubts whether the VPN propaganda would work, acknowledging to a casual observer that some of the regional VPNs' rhetoric might remind them of techniques of the past stating, "Instead of attracting people, we will lose them. Instead of informing them, we will entice rage and emotions, aggressiveness."[53] In addition, Gál poignantly expressed what might have been the root of the discrepancy between desirable outcomes and what some feared could turn into a failure of the democratic revolution; an alleged difference between local and national interests. According to him, the problem was visible in assembling the list of candidates for election.[54] It goes without saying that national interests were considered as being represented by the Coordination Centre.[55]

Yet there were more lines of division which may have contributed to the future VPN's problems with securing trust, such as the constant need for balance between participation and more of a liberal institutional approach, and also, the issue of affirmed cooperation with the Czech Civic Forum. The former concern has been elaborated on in a theoretical manner, emphasizing the VPN's need to acknowledge the social forces that emerged by way of the democratic revolution. The appeal for democratic participation was reflected in official letters the VPN issued to its supporters. Besides a reference to the instalment of pluralism and freedom as common goals manifested in the revolution, a careful recognition of the participation element occurred:

> Our activities have gradually expanded and we are attempting to preserve both energy and freedom of the November squares. […] Our vision of the so-called "participative democracy" is based on belief that a truly free and successful society does not solely reside in freely elected parliaments but also in an everlasting opportunity for every citizen to participate in public affairs through various civic activities.[56]

This draft outlined by Coordination Committee chair Fedor Gál was restructured, however, and in its final form signed by all of the Committee members the expression "participative democracy" was replaced by a mere reference to "democracy."[57]

The very acknowledgment of the VPN's original source of legitimacy, however, persisted through the early months and traces could be found in future developments. A member of the VPN's Political Department, Soňa Szomolányi, stated that the legitimacy of the VPN lay in November 1989, when it began removal of the old Communist regime.[58] By adhering to this very important idea, the VPN succumbed itself to a pressure which could not be simply withstood without substantial political losses. The legacy of the "energy and freedom of the November squares" became a matter of political struggle itself.

The latter issue, cooperation with the Civic Forum, needs to be contextualized within two realms. The first consists of the aforementioned balance between liberal and in-

53 SNA, f. VPN II., inv. 117b, b. 33. Secretariat, 18 April 1990, minutes.
54 SNA, f. VPN II., inv. 117b, b. 33. Secretariat, 18 April 1990, minutes.
55 Regional and national pursuits played a major role in the later development of the VPN. Vladimír Mečiar decided to gain favour of the regional VPN organizations, which further developed into a political contest with major consequences, some of which are still visible today.
56 SNA, f. VPN II., inv. 109, b. 28, A "thank you note" to supporters before the June 1990 elections.
57 SNA, f. VPN II., inv. 109, b. 28, A "thank you note" to supporters before the June 1990 elections.
58 SNA, f. VPN II., inv. 90, b. 20. Expert groups, SR VPN, Organizational building of the movement, 11 July 1991.

stitutional approaches to post-socialist transformation, and the second had to do with particular Slovak experiences with the perception of its Czechoslovak history. Both played a key role in gaining trust. The VPN based its legitimacy on compliance with the Civic Forum's pursuit of liberal economic transformation, or market transformation. On one hand, the VPN's proclamation on cooperation[59] could bode well within a broader public demand for change. On the other hand, it could also contribute to an understanding that the major societal changes would be informed by a central cooperation of sorts, thus weakening the national government and parliament.

Moreover, the proclaimed cooperation ought to go beyond election cooperation, "The alliance is not merely an alliance for the election, but rather an alliance for development of the co-habitation of the Czech and Slovak nations in the democratic federation."[60] By bundling the broader issue of societal transformation with the need for Czecho-Slovak coexistence, the VPN exposed itself to an open field of confrontation on yet another level, best characterized through the discourse on Czechoslovakism, which had substantially impacted the political environment even beyond the June 1990 election.[61] Norbert Kmeť suggests that the fight against Czechoslovakism was vital for Slovak post-Communist elites, especially those who could have been perceived as discredited by their past political activities. The peculiarity of the Slovak normalization period helped establish and promote new Slovak elites, who played a significant role in justifying the Communist regime. After the revolution, however, they did not simply fade away but instead strived for continuity within the new democratic environment, either in the VPN or other movements and parties.[62] The VPN's strong emphasis on universally applicable principles eventually clashed with a great deal of the former Communist elites. They then further capitalized on the VPN's very bifurcation of the dynamics between participatory, national, regionally and communally based forms of democracy and the liberal institutional democracy, which ultimately prevailed within its upper echelons. The cost of such an internal dispute resulted in the establishment of the platform For a Democratic Slovakia (Za demokratické Slovensko, ZDS), which later fully broke away in the form of the Movement for Democratic Slovakia (Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko, HZDS).

In the above paragraphs, a demonstration of how the formal aspect of the VPN's political style could be understood as a particular political strategy to gain political trust was attempted. This alone, in a way, was examined as a political language, mainly represented by the concepts of the entanglement of politics and ethics and the practice of usable totalitarianism.

59 SNA, f. VPN II., inv. 141, b. 180, Proclamation of OF and VPN to citizens of Czech and Slovak Federative Republic, 3 June 1990, signed by Peter Tatár.

60 SNA, f. VPN II., inv. 141, b. 180, Proclamation of OF and VPN to citizens of Czech and Slovak Federative Republic, 3 June 1990, signed by Peter Tatár.

61 KMEŤ, Norbert. Problém čechoslovakizmu na Slovensku po Novembri 1989. In HUDEK, Adam – KOPEČEK, Michal – MERVART, Jan (eds.) Čecho/*slovakismus*, Praha : Ústav pro soudobé dějiny – Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2019, pp. 379–383.

62 KMEŤ 2019. On the differences in continuities of the elites in Czechia and Slovakia after the 1989 revolution, see: EYAL, Gil. *The Origins of Postcommunist Elites: From Prague Spring to the Breakup of Czechoslovakia*. Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

A second political language now explored as an analytical tool applied in analysis of the emerging political landscape in the Slovak part of Czechoslovakia and/or the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic is the discourse of "return-to-Europe" or Europeanisation.

Within more liberal attitudes, the idea of Europe represented an antidote to nationalism. It meant breaking down barriers, building bridges and above all, integration into the European body. Such language could appear in order to unite or even to water down potential conflicts. That was the case in a speech by Milan Čič, prime minister of Slovakia, three months before the elections addressing the conflicting parts of emerging quarrels between Slovaks and Hungarians in the southern part of Slovak territory.[63] Very often the national narrative of the past mixed with the return-to-Europe vision, as expressed by Alexander Dubček, chair of the Federal assembly, at the commemoration of Milan Rastislav Štefánik. He voiced concern that the path to an integrated Europe should not be weakened, but on the contrary, it should be based on a mutual agreement of the two nations. Thus, it was within this particular return-to-Europe frame that he warned against misusing the legacy of Štefánik for separatist ambitions.[64]

Instead, an independent sub-category of the return-to-Europe narrative was built on constant references to European accession negotiations, and more broadly, articles on the "caring" features of European politicians and institutions. When Willy Brandt visited Prague and Bratislava, the idea of Germany on the way to reunification served as a model for Czechoslovakia. Furthermore, a strong argument in favour of the VPN pursuits of smooth integration at the expense of petty, ethno-national quarrels was offered in the example of Romania, whose instability was a constant reminder of the importance of conducting liberal reforms.[65] Romania represented, at the very early stages of post-revolutionary development, a rather threatening example of what could happen to a country that was unable to present itself as willing to undertake necessary reforms in a non-violent manner.

More importantly, an agreement on the form of integration was borne in the minds of the liberal elites, partly because there was a hope—pronounced by foreign minister Jiří Dienstbier at Harvard—that the former Eastern bloc could use a sort of Marshall plan in order to avoid possible competition among respective states.[66] A very practical and rather modern aspect of return-to-Europe was embodied by the attempts of Slovak major political parties and movements to become incorporated into respective European party structures. A vocal protagonist of such attempts was the Christian Democratic Movement, or KDH. The movement very quickly engaged in narratives highlighting the legacy of Charlemagne and the idea of Christian Europe as the true Europe, thus strengthening their legitimacy.

The narrative of return-to-Europe could be perceived as embedded in a broader understanding of Europeanisation.[67] In addition, Francis Fukuyama in his magisterial

63 Chceme žiť v bratstve, slobode a humanizme. In *Smena*, 6 March 1990, p. 2.
64 Štefánik nemôže byť zástavou pre separatizmus. In *Národná obroda*, 15 May 1990, p. 3.
65 FRIEDMAN, Thomas L. Upheaval in the East: Diplomacy; East Bloc Trips Buoys Baker Yet Alerts Him to the Odds. In *New York Times*, 12 February 1990, p. 12. https://www.nytimes.com/1990/02/12/world/upheaval-east-diplomacy-east-bloc-trip-buoys-baker-yet-alerts-him-odds.html
66 Druhý Marshallov plan. In *Národná obroda*, 19 May 1990, p. 6.
67 MARK, James – IACOB, Bogdan C. – RUPPRECHT, Tobias – SPASKOVSKA, Ljubica. *1989: A Global History of Eastern Europe*. Cambridge; New York : Cambridge University Press, 2019, pp. 129–130.

work *The End of History and the Last Man*, stressed that for Eastern Europe, the year 1989 could have well meant an opportunity to be recognized.[68] Such an interpretation tends to put the aforementioned myths of struggles for national liberation into a more complicated perspective, rendered considerably political. The idea that the radical contingency of an event brought by the revolution could pave the way for populations to demonstrate their pursuit to be recognized—take note of Rosanvallon's understanding of counter-democracy[69]—both internally and externally might have been perceived in a positive light.

Furthermore, Fukuyama also emphasized that there was no inherent contradiction between democracy and at least some of the newly emerging nationalisms.[70] The Slovak/Czecho-Slovak case adds credibility to this line of thinking. Therefore, one can be overwhelmed by vast amounts of articles, essays, declarations and statements that would connect the idea of return-to-Europe with a return to normalcy, civilization, democracy and decency. These, however, speak very little about what people could actually have imagined when they contemplated democracy, civilization, etc. The possible dynamic between recognition and liberal transformation has to be taken into consideration because gradually, out of these very dynamics, political splits could emerge.

The return-to-Europe vernacular could, at the same time serve, nationalist purposes, an idea best expressed by something one might call the German paradox. On one hand, the reunification of Germany could refer to the end of walls and borders between blocs, or more generally, between different mindsets. On the other hand, it could point to more sensitive national discourses and appear as a victorious struggle for national unity against all political and ideological odds. In other words, if Germans can be recognized as Germans, why not Slovaks? Multiplied by the wealth of changes occurring in Czechoslovakia and Slovakia respectively, this struggle between national recognition and liberal democratic aspirations was declared by Ján Cuper, who later ended up becoming one of the most loyal figures of the Mečiar regime. Regardless of his nationalist position, he voiced his concerns through a greatly symbolic case of the debate on the purpose of the new building for the Slovak parliament. While the VPN spread the idea that the new building could be a home for the intended Central European University, Cuper reacted, "I want every reasonable Slovak to understand my position. I am in no way against opening up to Europe. However, why does it again have to be at the expense of the nation?"[71] The VPN retaliated within two days, publishing an article entitled *Do we not want to be global?*[72]

The universality, or rather polyvalence, of the return-to-Europe narrative allowed for political subjects to engage without necessarily contradicting their own worldviews. In doing so, they eventually contributed to a more or less vague imagination, thus rendering it a powerful political language. Consequently, this kind of political language needs to be examined within its dynamics and in relation to other political languages,

68 FUKUYAMA, Francis. *The End of History and the Last Man*. London : Penguin Random House, 2020, pp. 152–163.
69 ROSANVALLON 2008, p. 8.
70 FUKUYAMA 2020, p. 37.
71 CUPER, Ján. Národný parlament na Bratislavskom hrade (Áno, či nie?). In *Smena*, 6 March 1990, p. 4.
72 GRESSNER, Juraj. Nechceme byť svetoví? In *Smena*, 8 March 1990, p. 2.

such as the aforementioned language of totalitarianism. The bottom line here is that the VPN could actually, like other subjects as well, employ the European narrative in order to gain trust. In other words, return-to-Europe represented a trump card for those in power to portray themselves as integrators. Indeed, a direct collaboration with the OF as well as with other international and foreign subjects or individuals could have served this very purpose as well.

Conclusion

The abovementioned political languages bore witness to attempts at gaining political trust and retaining or even reinforcing legitimacy gained through the event of a democratic revolution. The focus was on three particular yet interrelated political languages: the entanglement of ethics and politics, totalitarianism, and Europeanisation or return-to-Europe. In doing so, mainly the necessity of the historization of legitimacy and trust was accentuated. Relying on the theory of Pierre Rosanvallon, particularly his understanding of the gap between legitimacy and trust and more precisely, on the so-called state of grace where the two aspects tend to merge into one. However, attention should be drawn to the need to understand the examined political languages in their mutual existence as well as entwinement with other political languages, such as, memory politics, the language of decency, democracy, regional autonomy, etc. Above all, this paper accentuates the need to study trust and legitimacy not as sole political concepts, but rather as analytical tools which allow us to historicise the political imaginations and concepts employed by post-revolutionary protagonists within their activities and discourses. Put differently, a study of the attempts at gaining trust and the mechanisms of legitimacy helps us to extract practical political behaviour employed in the emergence of the political landscape of post-socialist societies because it reveals national peculiarities and explores them in the broader Central-European and European context.

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